



Mallet finger discharge advice

You have snapped the tendon that normally straightens the end joint of the finger. The tendon may even pull off a small fragment of bone. This causes the tip of the finger to lie in a bent position and you are unable to straighten it.

A splint will be applied and should be worn continuously, even at night, to keep the injured part of finger straight for 8 weeks (6 weeks if bony fragment). At the end of this time the splint is worn for the next one month at night and whenever the finger might be at risk of injury.

During treatment, it is important to keep the injured part of the finger straight, even when taking the splint off to wash. This can be done by placing the hand flat on a table, removing the splint and cleaning the finger. Replace the splint without bending the finger.

Limit washing the finger as little as possible to reduce the chance of the finger bending. Initially aim for cleaning the finger twice a week. It is important to keep the finger and splint dry to avoid skin irritation.

It is important however to move the rest of the joints in the hand, particularly the joint in the middle of the finger.

After the splint has stopped being used (around 10-12 weeks) it is important to keep gently moving the finger and gradually resume daily activities within the limits of discomfort. This will help improve any stiffness and ensure the safest return to normal function. If you are struggling to get the movement back please contact the fracture clinic.

There may be redness, swelling and slight pain over the joint for a few months afterwards. This will settle.

You may be left with a small bump or be unable to straighten the finger fully. If this happens it is unfortunately a permanent feature but will not affect function of your finger.

Occasionally after 3 months splint treatment the tendon may fail to heal. Most fingers function well despite a droop at the end joint however surgical fusion of the end joint may be considered.

Should you have any worries or concerns following discharge from hospital, please contact either the

**1) Fracture Clinic: 02871611166
(8:45am until 4:45pm, Mon to Fri)**

or

**2) Emergency Dept: 02871611379
(Outside these hours)**