Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Metacarpal Head/Neck Fracture of the Hand

Version number: **6**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Metacarpal Head/Neck Fracture of the Hand

Patient Information

Trauma & Orthopaedic Department

- Author ID: VL
- Leaflet ref: Musc 061
- Version: 7
- Last review: June 2026
- Expiry date: June 2028

Introduction

You have fractured (broken) a bone near the knuckle of one of your fingers.

The fracture has occurred in a part of the bone which normally heals well without problems.

The pain, tenderness and swelling you are experiencing in the hand should gradually settle over a period of 6-8 weeks.



Advice

Your finger may be strapped to the next finger. This is called neighbour or buddy strapping. It supports your finger in the early stages of healing to help reduce the pain and allow movement. You can replace this tape at home if needed. Tape is not usually required for more that 7-10 days but can be removed as pain allows.

Simple pain relief e.g. paracetamol may be taken as required.

Smoking slows down the healing process. We advise that you stop (at least whilst recovering from your injury) Speak to your GP or go online at:
https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree

Use your hand as normally as possible for light activities as pain allows. Avoid heavy lifting, ball and contact sports for 6 - 8 weeks.



Things to expect

As the bone heals, it is usual for a lump to form at the break site, and for the knuckle to be less prominent, this can be permanent. Hand grip however is generally very good after this type of injury.

Most injuries heal well without any problems; however it may take 3-6 months for your symptoms to settle completely.

Exercise





It is important to maintain movement of the hand to avoid stiffness developing, even if this means overcoming some discomfort.

Try to bend your fingers, aiming to touch your palm, and then straighten them regularly through the day.

It is quite normal to feel some discomfort following exercise, but it is important that this discomfort eases within 2 hours of finishing the exercise and does not have an overall negative effect on your symptoms.

Disclaimer

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone, and while every precaution has been taken in selecting these exercises, they do not come without risks. If you have any concerns regarding your injury, or whether you should partake in the exercises, then you should consult your GP or physiotherapist before beginning any exercises in this leaflet.

The exercise plans shown in this leaflet are designed to be used as a guide and a point of reference; they can be modified and progressed under the supervision of your physiotherapist.

For more information online please visit https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/virtual-fracture-clinic

If you are still experiencing significant symptoms after 6 weeks, or if you have any concerns, please contact:

Fracture Clinic Helpline: 0300 7072595

Please leave a message with name, telephone number and brief description of reason for call. We will aim to call you back within 24hours Monday to Friday 8.30am until 5pm (please note it will be Monday if you call over the weekend).

Adult MSK Physiotherapy Self-Referral

If you are struggling to regain your movement or get back to normal activities, you can self-refer to **Physiotherapy**. A referral form can be found on this webpage:

https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/adult-msk-physiotherapy-self-referral

Please scan the QR Code to access the website.

Telephone Numbers:

Boston House Health Centre Telephone 0300 707 1113

Leigh Infirmary Telephone 0300 707 1597 / 0300 707 1595

Platt Bridge Health Centre Telephone 0300 707 1772



Version number: **6**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

All rights reserved © 2026
WWL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust