Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Metacarpal Fracture of the Hand

Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Patient Information

Trauma & Orthopaedics

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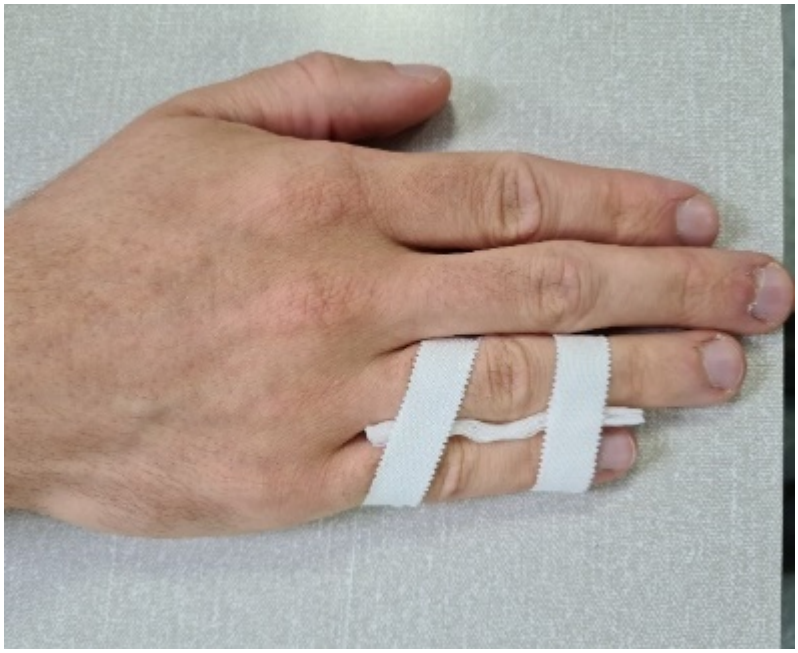
Introduction



You have broken (fractured) a bone in your hand called the metacarpal. This bone connects your fingers to your wrist. A fracture is stable and should heal well without the need for follow up.

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

Injury recovery



You may have a removable splint and / or your finger may be strapped to the next finger. This supports your hand in the early stages of healing to help reduce the pain but allow movement. You can replace this tape at home if needed. Tape is not usually required for more than 7-10 days, but can be removed as pain allows. The splint can also be removed as soon as tolerated and at rest, to allow gentle wrist movements.

Take simple painkillers e.g. paracetamol for as long as you need to; do not take more than the recommended dose. Your local pharmacist is a useful source for pain relief information.

Smoking slows down the healing process. We advise that you stop (at least whilst recovering from your injury). Speak to your General Practitioner (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. Make sure you do not wear the splint after 4 weeks.

Things to expect

As the bone heals, it is usual for a lump to form at the break site; this may be noticeable, and it can be permanent. It should not affect day to day activities or grip strength.

Most injuries heal well without any problems; however, it may take 3-6 months for your symptoms to settle completely. If you have any worries, please call the helpline.





Exercise

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

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

2. If provided, take the splint off, and try gentle wrist movements as tolerated.

It is quite normal to feel some discomfort following exercise, but it is important that this disc omfort 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 sele cting 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 refer ence; 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

Frequently asked questions

When can I drive?

You must not drive with the splint on. It is your own responsibility. You are allowed to drive when:

- You can safely control the car
- You are no longer using the tape or splint
- You can grip the steering wheel or gear stick

- You can perform an emergency stop

When can I go back to work?

This depends on your individual situation. You can return to work when you feel able to do your job. Consider a phased return where needed / possible.

Further Advice

If you have any concerns regarding your hand, contact:

Fracture Clinic Helpline 0300 707 2595

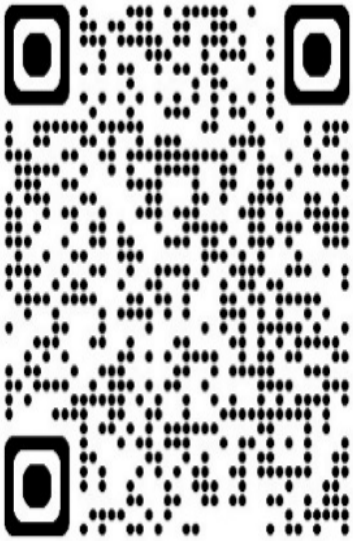
Please leave a message with name, telephone number and brief description of reason for call. We will aim to call you back within 24hours Monday to Friday 8.30am until 5:00pm (please note it will be Monday if you call over the weekend).

If you have any urgent concerns out of hours, please call 111.

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



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