

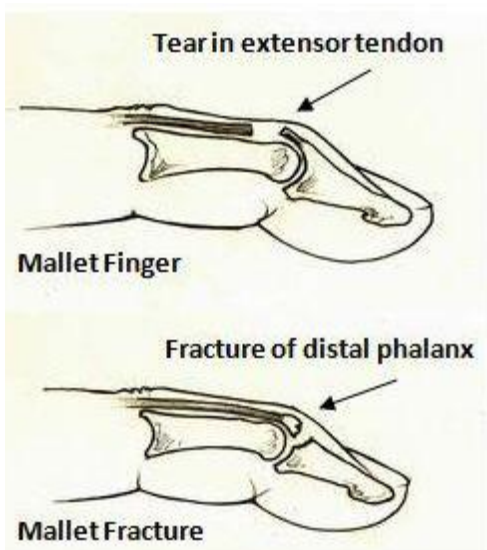
PATIENT INFORMATION

MALLET INJURY



What is a mallet injury?

A mallet injury is damage to the tendon that straightens the end joint of your finger. The tendon can either tear from the bone (soft tissue mallet), or a piece of bone can come off with the tear (bony mallet).



Your injury is:

- ☐ Soft tissue
- ☐ Bony

What are the symptoms?

You may have pain, swelling or bruising over the joint and be unable to straighten the finger (extensor lag). The finger will usually be bent at the end joint.

How are mallet injuries managed?

Most mallet injuries can be managed in a splint, although there are some exceptions. Your healthcare provider can let you know how your injury can be managed.

What is a mallet splint?

A mallet splint is an externally applied splint which holds the end joint straight (in extension). This allows the tendon or bone ends to come together and heal. Tendons heal with scar tissue and take longer to fully heal than bone.

The mallet splint should fit snugly, but not too tightly. It is designed to bend slightly backwards at the end joint, but should allow the middle finger joint to move normally. It must be worn as instructed and if it needs to be removed for cleaning, the finger must be kept supported underneath to prevent it from drooping.

Soft tissue injury: splint to be worn 24 hrs a day for 8 weeks, then for 4 weeks at night time only.

Bony injuries: splint to be worn full time for 24 hrs a day for 6 weeks.

Problems with your mallet splint:

The splint can become loose as your swelling goes down. It can cause rubbing on the skin. It may become too tight if the swelling increases.

Keeping the splint clean and dry and elevating your hand can help.

For any issues with your splint, please contact the VFC or Hand Therapy.

After you stop wearing your splint, if your finger remains straight, you can continue moving it. For soft tissue injuries, wear your splint at night time for a further 4 weeks. For both types of injury can also use your splint during heavy activity or sports for a few weeks once you stop wearing it all the time.

After your initial treatment in a mallet splint, you will be referred to Hand Therapy and they will contact you to arrange an appointment to start the rehabilitation of your finger.

If the finger starts to drop again immediately out of the splint, then replace your splint for a further 2 weeks all the time and then try removing it again.

By 12 weeks, the injury should have healed. The splint can now be removed completely, and you can use your hand normally.

What can I expect after treatment?

Most injuries are successfully treated in a splint, however you may notice a small bump or remaining bend at the tip of your finger. This should not affect your function and is a normal consequence of the injury.

Ongoing pain is common and can take up to 12 months to settle. It is common to develop wear and tear type arthritis at the joint after a mallet injury, but this is rarely too troublesome.

Occasionally, the tendon doesn't heal and you may be left with a painful joint that droops.

If you do develop ongoing issues, please contact VFC or Hand Therapy.

Should you have any worries or concerns following your discharge from hospital please contact:

Virtual Fracture Clinic

07:00 – 14:30 Monday-Friday

Worcester Royal Hospital 01905 760 259

<https://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/virtual-fracture-clinic/>



Hand Therapy (Occupational Therapy)

Worcester Royal Hospital 01905 760 683

Alexandra Hospital Redditch 01527 512 146

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.