

Discharge advice following a mallet finger injury

Information for patients from the Emergency Department

What is my injury?

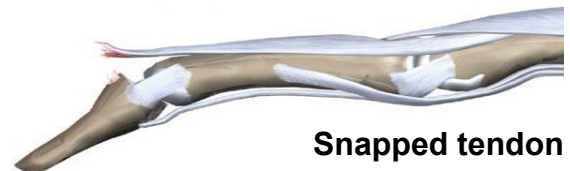
You have a mallet finger and cannot straighten the tip of your finger.



Mallet finger

How does this happen?

The usual cause is stubbing the end of the finger. You may have snapped the tendon that normally straightens the end joint of your finger, which has caused the tip of your finger to lie in a bent position and you are unable to straighten it.



Snapped tendon

How is my injury treated?

A splint is applied and should be worn all the time, even at night, to keep your finger straight for six to eight weeks.



Splint

At the end of this time the splint is worn for one more month at night only; when your finger may be at risk of injury.

How do I look after my finger in the splint?

Even with splinting there is a chance that your finger will not be as straight as before but keeping it in the splint gives it the best chance possible. It is tempting to test how well your finger is doing by taking the splint off or bending the tip of your finger, but this can cause further damage and rupture any healing of the tendon that has occurred.



The splint needs to be taken off so you can clean your finger and the splint. When taking the splint off to wash, place your hand flat on a table, remove the splint and clean your finger. Replace the splint without bending your finger. Limit washing the finger to as little as twice a week to reduce chances of your finger bending.

What should I expect long term?

You may have redness, swelling, and slight pain over your joint for a few months after your injury; this will settle. Occasionally the tendon may fail to heal. Most fingers work well despite a droop at the end joint, however, surgery of the end joint may need to be considered.

When should I ask for further help?

If you are having problems, please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic for further advice.

Virtual Fracture Clinic	Emergencies only (Monday to Friday)	General enquiries (Monday to Friday)	Contact number	Email
William Harvey Hospital, Ashford	9am to 12.30pm	12.30pm to 5pm	07929 87 83 50	ekh-tr.VFCWHH@nhs.net
Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate	9am to 12.30pm	12.30pm to 5pm	07929 87 82 83	ekh-tr.VFCQEQM@nhs.net

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation