

## Neck of 5<sup>th</sup> Metacarpal Fracture

Hand 5

### Fracture Care Team: Shared Care Plan

Trust Switchboard for both sites: 0300 131 4500

Fracture clinic and orthopaedic outpatient appointments:

- Eastbourne 0300 131 4788
- Conquest 0300 131 4861

Casting Department: Eastbourne 0300 131 5564

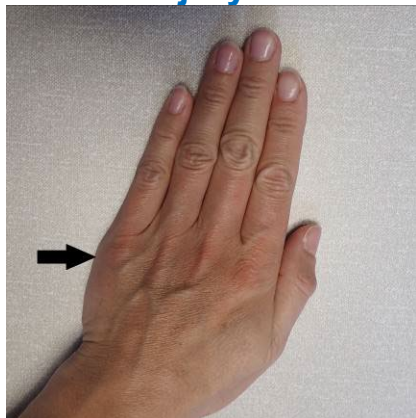
Casting Department: Conquest 0300 131 4860

This information leaflet explains the ongoing management of your injury.

### You have sustained an injury to the neck of your 5<sup>th</sup> metacarpal (long bone by little finger)

- Healing:** This normally takes approximately 6 weeks to heal. The knuckle on the outside of your hand is likely to always look different after this injury- this will not affect how you can do things.
- Pain and swelling:** Take painkillers if required. You may find it continues to be a bit achy and swollen for a few months after your injury. The splint provided is for comfort, it does not affect how well it heals. We often also give a buddy splint to hold the little finger (but allow it to keep bending).
- Using your hand:** You may use the hand, work with your pain limits. It is important to keep the rest of the finger bending to stop it becoming stiff.
- Follow up:** We do not routinely follow up these injuries as they heal well. However, if you continue to have pain or are limited in what you can do please get in contact with us on the above number.
- Future injury** These are common injuries. In the future, it is best to avoid damaging your hand. If you are frustrated or angry, please try breathing techniques or exercise – for example, have running shoes by your front door, or join a martial arts club.

## Area of injury:



If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan,

**Or** if you are experiencing pain or symptoms, other than at the site of the original injury

**Or** surrounding area, then please phone the Fracture Care Team on the details provided above for advice.

## Please follow the plan below:

Weeks since injury	Plan
0 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Use the splint for comfort</li><li>✓ Start the exercises, work within your pain limits</li></ul>
3 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Start the stage 2 exercises</li><li>✓ Use the splint if needed.</li><li>✓ Begin using the hand for normal tasks but be guided by your pain levels.</li></ul>
6 - 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ The injury has healed.</li><li>✓ Carry out normal tasks</li><li>✗ Heavy tasks or lifting may cause discomfort</li></ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ If you are still experiencing significant pain and swelling then please contact the Fracture Care Team for advice.</li></ul>

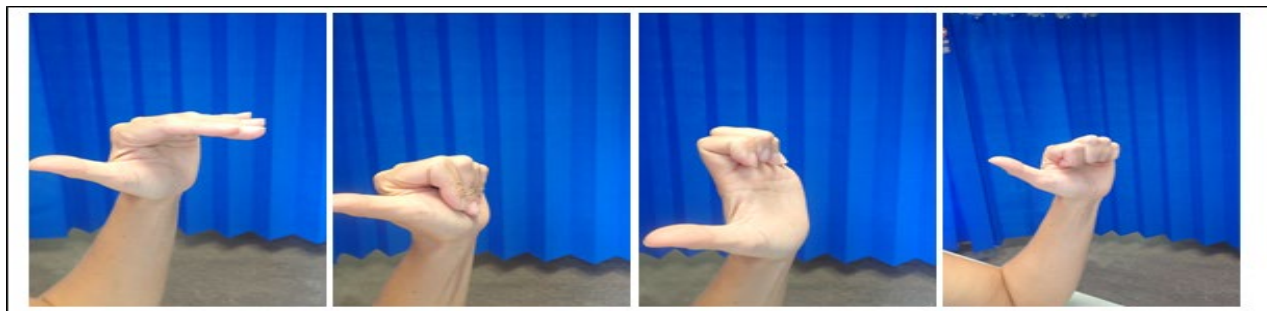
## Advice for a new injury

### Cold packs:

A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief.

Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every few hours. The ice must never be in direct contact with the skin.

### Initial Exercises:



## Exercises:

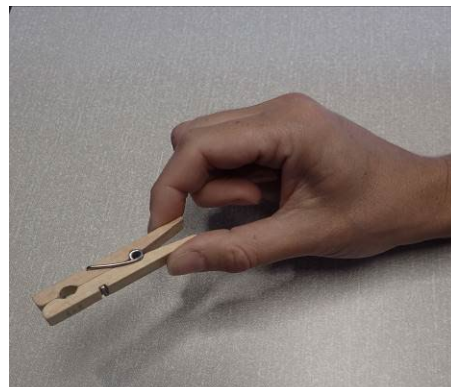
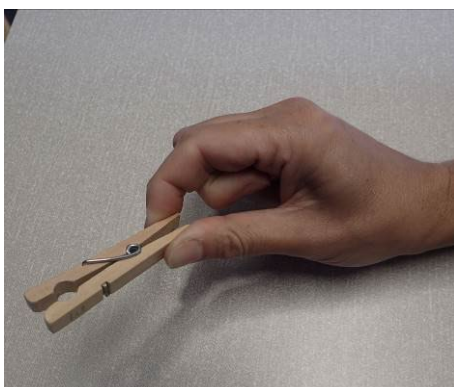
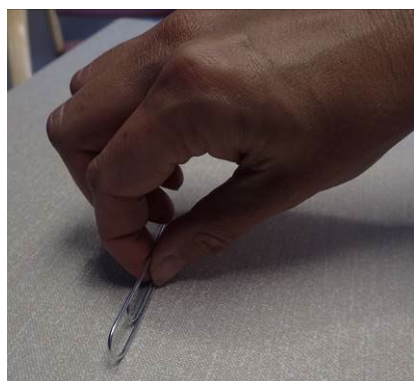
### Stage 2 Exercises: after 3 weeks



Squeeze a soft ball, playdough, plastic bottle or similar item.

Do this for 30-60 seconds.

Practice hand movements, here are some examples; turning keys, picking up small objects, doing crafts or anything that involves using your hands.



Practice your pinch grip; squeeze objects such as clothes pegs.

## Smoking cessation

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/> or discuss this with your GP.

## Sources of information

This information leaflet has been developed by the Fracture Care Team at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Fracture Care Team and adapted for use at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust. Information been updated during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that patients with injuries have information, support and care despite social distancing.

## Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net).

## Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

## Other formats

**If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse, practitioner or doctor.

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## Reference

Thank you to the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust and to Kate Weatherly, Specialist Orthopaedic Practitioner for the first version.

**This leaflet can also be found at: [www.esht.nhs.uk/leaflet/neck-of-5th-meta-carpal-fracture/](http://www.esht.nhs.uk/leaflet/neck-of-5th-meta-carpal-fracture/)**

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Mr Guy Selmon – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon  
Prof Scarlett McNally - Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon  
Miss Miranda Champion - Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon  
Helen Harper-Smith – Professional Lead Physiotherapist  
Hilary Kircher – Clinical / Operational Lead Outpatient Physiotherapist

The directorate group that has agreed this patient information leaflet:

Diagnostic, Anaesthetic and Surgery - Department of Trauma and Orthopaedics

Next review date: September 2025  
Responsible clinician/author: Helen Harper-Smith – Professional Lead Physiotherapist  
Prof Scarlett McNally – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

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