Thumb Distal Phalanx Fracture (Tuft fracture)  

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 broken your distal phalanx (the end of your finger). This is sometimes called a tuft fracture

Healing: This normally takes approximately 4-6 weeks to heal.

Pain and swelling: Take your normal painkillers if you are in pain. It is normal for your finger to be a bit achy and swollen for a couple of months after this type of injury.

Using your hand: You may use the hand as pain allows. You may have been given a splint or you can strap your fingers together for comfort. It is important to use the hand and 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 or e-mail.

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,

Or have any questions, please phone the Fracture Care Team on the details provided above for advice.
Please follow the plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks since injury</th>
<th>Plan</th>
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| 0 - 3              | ✓ Use the splint or strapping if needed for comfort  
                     ✓ Keep your fingers moving to prevent stiffness –see exercises |
| 3 - 6              | ✓ Try not to use the splint  
                     ✓ Move your injured finger-see exercises stage 2 |
| 6 - 12             | ✓ The injury has healed.  
                     ✓ Return to normal activities |
| 12                 | ✗ If you are still experiencing significant pain and swelling then please contact the Fracture Care Team for advice. |

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 – to start straight away

Do these exercises several times a day

Touch each finger to your thumb.  
Repeat x 5
Bend and straighten all the joints in your fingers as shown.

Repeat x 5

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**Stage 2 Exercises**
Continue with initial exercises as well.

Use your other hand to keep your finger steady and bend and straighten the finger joint nearest your palm.

Repeat x 5

Use your other hand to keep your finger steady and bend and straighten the finger joint nearest the end of your finger.

Repeat x 5
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: smokefree.nhs.uk 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 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 – Tel: Tel: 0300 131 4731 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene
The trust is 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 the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: 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.

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Reference

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

This leaflet can also be found at: www.esht.nhs.uk/leaflet/thumb-distal-phalanx-fracture-tuft-fracture/

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
- Mr Guy Selmon – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Mr Andrew Skyrme – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Mrs 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 Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Department of Trauma and Orthopaedics

Next review date: April 2023
Responsible clinician/author: Helen Harper-Smith – Professional Lead Physiotherapist
Mrs Scarlett McNally - Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

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