

# Patient information

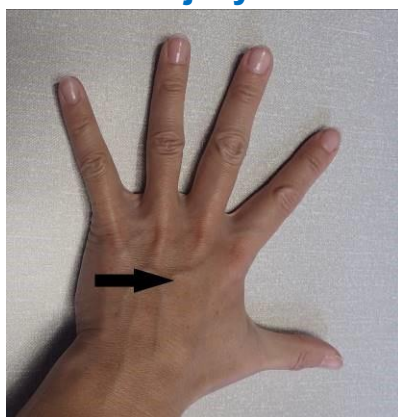
## Metacarpal Fracture

This information explains the ongoing management of your injury.

You have broken one of your metacarpal bones (long bones in your hand- see picture).

- Healing:** This normally takes approximately 4-6 weeks to heal.
- Pain and swelling:** Take painkillers if you are in pain. You may find your hand will be a bit achy and swollen for a few months after your injury.
- Using your hand:** You may use the hand as pain allows. You have been given a splint - use this to support your hand whilst it heals.  
It is important to keep the fingers bending to stop them 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 your GP.

### 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, then please phone the Fracture Care Team on the details provided above for advice.

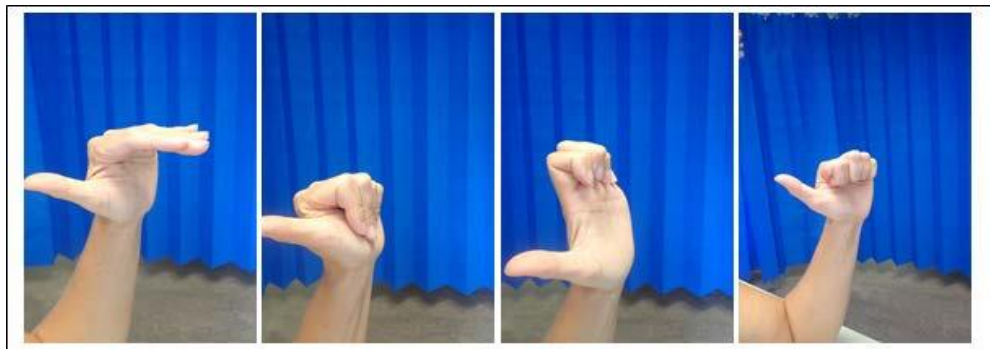
**Please follow the Management / Rehabilitation plan below -**

<b>Weeks since injury</b>	<b>Plan</b>
<b>0 - 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Wear the splint for comfort.</li><li>✓ Move your fingers to prevent stiffness- see exercises below</li></ul>
<b>3- 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Try not to use the splint</li><li>✓ Start doing your normal activities work within your pain limits.</li><li>✓ Do the stage 2 exercises below</li></ul>
<b>6 -12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ The injury has healed.</li><li>✗ Heavy tasks or lifting may cause discomfort</li></ul>
<b>12</b>	<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:**

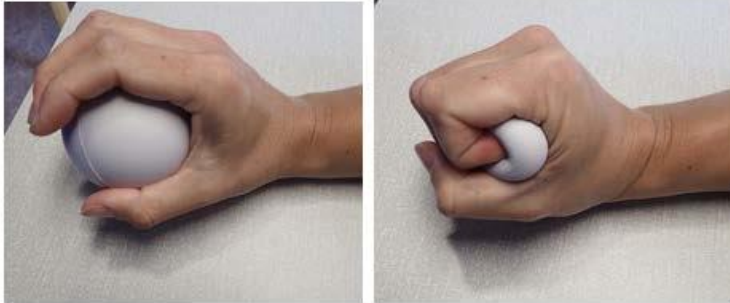
A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief.

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.

**Exercises to start straight away**

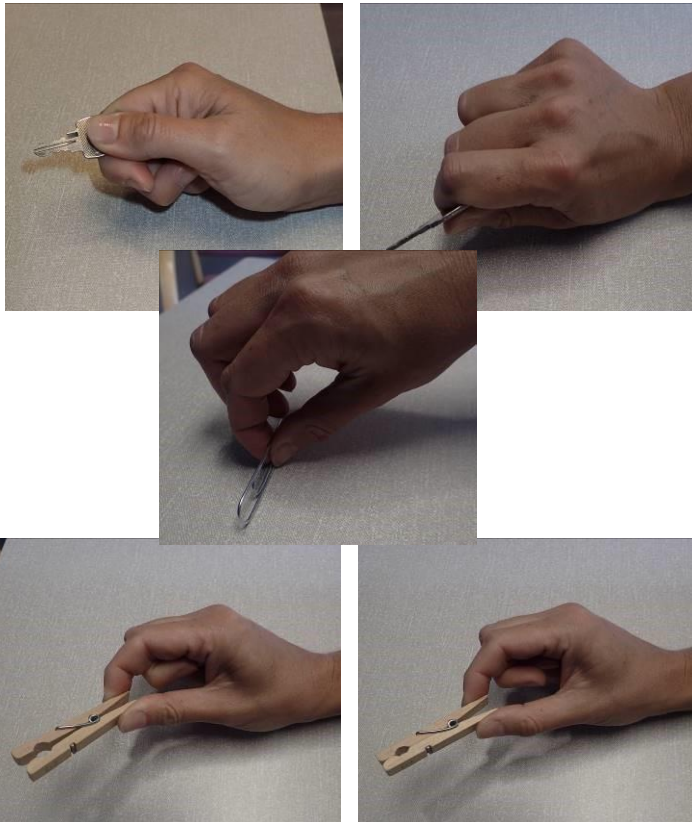
Gently move your fingers

## Stage 2 exercises



Gently squeeze a soft ball, playdough, plastic bottle or similar item.

Do this for 30-60 seconds a few times a day. Do not force the hand and stay within your pain limits



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

You can also 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: [smokefree.nhs.uk](http://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 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 – Tel: 0300 131 4731 or by email at: [eshtr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:eshtr.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](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

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:  
Dr Danielle Vidler – Consultant and Clinical lead Emergency Department CQ  
Mr Utham Shanker – Consultant and Clinical lead Emergency Department EDGH

The directorate group that has agreed this patient information leaflet:

URGENT CARE

Next review date: December 2027

Responsible clinician/author: Emergency Department Consultants

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