

### What is my diagnosis?

You have fractured (broken) a bone in your hand called the metacarpal.

The type of injury you have suffered is painful, but almost all of these injuries heal fully **without the need for any intervention or surgery**.

Strapping the finger to the finger beside it (**buddy strapping**) or using a wrist splint helps with the pain.



### What happens next?

- Your X-rays and notes will be checked by an Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon.

**If nothing further is needed, we will not contact you**

- If any other treatment or assessment is needed we will contact you by telephone or post
- Please make sure the Emergency Department/Minor Injury Unit reception staff have your mobile and home phone numbers
- Occasionally you will receive a telephone consultation or fracture clinic appointment.

### What can I expect during my recovery?

- During **weeks 1 and 2**, the hand will be painful, but this will ease over time
- Simple pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen can be helpful
- It is normal to have bruising and swelling in the hand
- The strapping and splint can be taken off once the pain has improved – usually after **one week**
- It is safe to move your fingers and hand – this will not stop healing. Perform the exercises on the next page as the pain improves
- You can use your hand for light day-to-day activities and may return to work and driving once the pain has improved, and you feel it is safe to do so
- Manual work and sports are usually started around **4-8 weeks** after injury
- There is **no specific time you can drive again**. It is **illegal** to drive when wearing a sling, splint, cast, or moonboot. As you recover, it is your legal responsibility to be certain before you return to driving that you are able to control your vehicle normally and safely.

### Key exercises

#### Weeks 1-2

- While strapped/splinted, bend and straighten your knuckles as shown in the pictures
- The fingers should not be crossing or twisted. If you are concerned about the position of your fingers please contact us using the details below



#### Week 2 onwards

- The strapping and splint should be removed to allow you to work on extending the fingers then making a full fist.
- Do this for **5 minutes, 5 times** a day until you regain full movement.



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### What if I have a problem?

Very occasionally some patients have difficulties with ongoing pain or stiffness. If you have any issues beyond **three months** after injury, please contact us on the details below.

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### Get in touch

Please get in touch via our trauma email if you have queries about your injury:

[traumaenquiriesRIE@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:traumaenquiriesRIE@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)

If you do not receive a reply after 3 working days call our Monday-Friday helpline (8am-4pm):  
**0131 242 3410**

### Urgent issues

Please call the department where you were initially seen about your injury:

- **RIE Minor Injuries Unit:** 0131 242 3942 (8am- midnight, if after midnight contact RIE Emergency Department 0131 242 1300)
- **WGH Minor Injuries Clinic:** 0131 536 3468 (9am-8:30pm)
- **SJH Emergency Department:** 01506 523 011 (24 hours).