

What is my diagnosis?

You have a small break near the end of your finger which stops the finger being straight. This is called a **mallet finger injury**.

Almost all of these injuries heal fully **without the need for any intervention or surgery**. It is important that this injury is treated correctly to achieve a good outcome. Your finger must be kept straight in the splint provided **at all times** for the next 6 weeks.



What happens next?

- Your X-rays and notes will be checked by a 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.

What can I expect during my recovery?

Weeks 1-2

- The tip of the finger will be painful but simple pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen can be taken to manage your pain
- It is important to move the knuckle and middle joint of the finger to avoid stiffness.

Weeks 2-6

- The pain will begin to improve but you should continue to use the splint **at all times** except when washing your finger (see “**Managing your splint**” overleaf).

Weeks 7-8

- The splint can be removed during the day but should still be used overnight and during sports for the next 2 weeks
- The finger should be straight, although a small droop may remain
- The finger may be stiff and swollen for several more weeks
- If you have concerns after 8 weeks, please get in touch using the details overleaf.



Managing your splint

To wash your finger you must keep the finger straight and use the support of a table or sink. If the tip of your finger bends during treatment, your tendon may not heal properly.



What if I have a problem?

It is extremely uncommon for this injury not to heal. However, some patients are left with a small droop at the tip of the finger. This does not affect the function of your finger and hand and surgery is rarely needed.

If you have any issues beyond **12 weeks** after injury please contact us on the details below

Get in touch

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

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)