

What is my diagnosis?

You have fractured (broken) a bone in your hand called 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 splint helps with the pain.



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.
- 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 you may return to work and driving once 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.

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Metacarpal Fracture

What do I need to know?

Key exercises

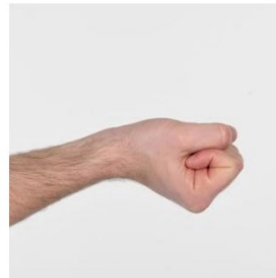
Weeks 1-2

- 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.



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.

Get in touch

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

traumaenquiriesRIE@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Helpline Monday-Friday (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)

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