

# Patient Information Sheet - 78

## Finger and Thumb Injuries

### *What do I need to know?*



Edinburgh  
Orthopaedics

### What is my diagnosis?

You have broken (fractured) a bone in your fingers or thumb.

Almost all of these injuries heal fully **without the need for any intervention or surgery**. Sometimes the finger is supported by the finger next to it with some tape for a short period, this is called “buddy strapping”.

**Early movement is the key to a quick recovery**



### 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 ensure the Emergency Department/Minor Injury Unit reception staff have your mobile and phone home numbers.

### What can I expect during my recovery?

#### Weeks 1-2

- The finger or thumb will be painful but simple pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen can be taken to manage your pain.
- Change the **buddy strapping** if it gets dirty but it should be in place for 2 weeks.
- Any tape can be used for buddy strapping
- It is important to move the finger gently to avoid stiffness.

#### Weeks 2-6

- Remove the **buddy strapping**
- The pain will begin to improve, and you can perform the exercises on the next page.

#### Weeks 7-8

- The finger may be stiff and swollen for several more weeks but doing the exercises will help
- If you have concerns after **8 weeks**, please get in touch using the details overleaf.

There is **no specific time you can drive**. 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 car normally and safely.

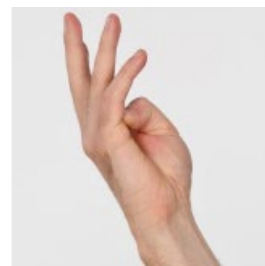
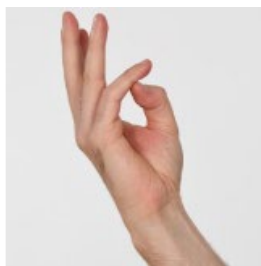
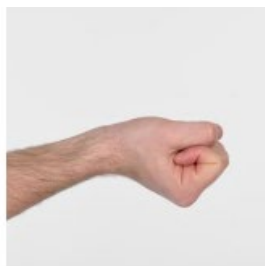
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### *What do I need to know?*



### Key exercises (3 times a day)



Gently begin by **stretching out the fingers**, then try and **make a fist**. This may be uncomfortable, but you do not need to push movement to the point to pain. Try and do this for **5 minutes, 5 times a day**. When the hand is warmed up, touch the tip of each finger with your thumb. Once you can do this, start to bring the tip of your thumb to the bottom of each finger.

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### What if I have a problem?

Most finger and thumb injuries heal without any difficulties. If you have any issues beyond **8 weeks** after injury, please contact us on the numbers below.

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### Get in touch

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

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