

Compliments, comments & complaints

If you'd like to compliment, comment or complain about our service please contact our Customer Services Department:

Customer Services Department

Livewell Southwest
Room AF3, Local Care Centre
200 Mount Gould Road
Plymouth
PL4 7PY

Tel: 01752 435201

Email: customerservicespch@nhs.net

Contact details

The Minor Injuries Units are open every day of the year, including Bank Holidays.

Minor Injuries Unit Cumberland Centre

Damerel Close
Plymouth
PL1 4JZ

Tel: 01752 434390

Opening times: 8:30am - 9pm

Minor Injuries Unit South Hams Hospital

Plymouth Road
Kingsbridge
TQ7 1AT

Tel: 01548 852349

Opening times: 9am - 5pm

Minor Injuries Unit Tavistock Hospital

Spring Hill
Tavistock
PL19 8LD

Tel: 01822 612233

Opening times: 8am - 10pm

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Livewell Southwest



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Information & Advice

Mallet Finger

Minor Injuries Unit

Cumberland Centre
South Hams Hospital
Tavistock Hospital

This information leaflet is for people who have had a mallet finger injury. It describes the injury, symptoms and management.

What is a mallet finger?

A mallet finger is where the end joint of the finger bends towards the palm and cannot be straightened. This is usually caused by an injury to the end of the finger, tearing the tendon that straightens the finger.

Sometimes a flake of bone may have been pulled off where the tendon should be attached to the bone. An x-ray that the Practitioner requested will show whether this has happened.

In either case, without the use of this tendon the finger remains bent.

What are the symptoms?

- Pain
- Swelling
- Inability to straighten the tip of the finger

How is it treated?

Your finger will be placed in a plastic splint to keep your finger straight with the end joint slightly over extended (bent backwards). The splint must be worn both day and night for ten weeks to allow the two ends of the torn tendon or bone to stay together and heal.

The splint will be taped on, allowing you to bend the middle joint of your finger.

The splint should only be removed for cleaning (see instructions to right). Although you can still use your finger, you should keep your hand elevated most of the time until the Practitioner sees you in two weeks' time. This will help to reduce any swelling and pain.

Take regular simple painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen for pain relief.

How to keep your finger and splint clean and dry

The splinted finger must be kept clean and dry at all times. If the skin becomes wet inside the splint it will become sore. It is important to wash both your finger and the splint at least once a day.

Keep your finger flat on the table or firm surface, take the strapping off the splint and slide the splint off your finger.

Wash and dry your finger (you may need to use a hairdryer) and the splint using soap and water. Keep the end joint straight at all times by keeping your finger flat on the table. You may find it easier if someone helps you each day as any movement of the tip of your finger may delay healing.

Slide the dry splint back over the fingertip, still keeping the finger straight.

Replace the strapping, which should cover the middle of the splint and should not cover the middle joint of the finger.

Your Practitioner appointment is in 2 weeks:

Your Consultant Clinic appointment is in 10 weeks: