

Central slip injury - surgically repaired (page 1 of 4)



Patient Label

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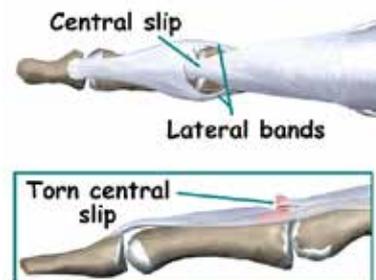
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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

How does it happen?

It usually happens when you have a sharp lacerating injury to the skin and tendon, called your central slip that runs across the middle joint on your finger. This means you will be unable to straighten the middle joint on your finger.



How is it treated?

In your case the broken tendon ends have been surgically repaired and now it is vitally important for you to follow the rehabilitation programme as instructed by your therapist. If you do not follow these instructions you may snap your tendon again and cause your surgery to fail.

A small finger splint will be made for you to help keep the middle joint on your injured finger completely straight for 4-6 weeks. This allows the injured tendon time to heal and it is very important that you constantly wear the splint and only remove it for gentle hand washing and exercise. If you do not follow this advice the tendon will not heal properly and you could be left with a bent finger that cannot straighten.



Elevation

For the first few weeks after your surgery it is very important that you keep your hand up above the level of your heart to help reduce any swelling. By reducing the swelling from your hand you will suffer less pain, recover movement and return to normal life more quickly following surgery.

What do I do with the splint?

- you must wear your splint at all times
- you must keep your finger and splint dry. If your finger becomes wet, your skin will turn white, become wrinkled and possibly sore

- it is important that you do not stick your finger out but let it rest in line with the other fingers
- you need to check that the splint fits well and the finger is securely resting straight in the splint
- do not remove your splint at all until you have been shown how to do so
- if there are any problems with your splint you must contact your hand therapist for it to be checked.



How to remove and replace your splint

You will be shown how to remove your splint so that you can clean and dry your finger and check your skin. It is recommended that you have help to do this.

Make sure that you have everything ready before you begin:

You will need:

- new tape cut to the right length if not using velcro straps
- warm soapy cloth or baby wipe
- a towel to dry your finger
- a small pair of scissors

1. With your finger supported on the table, unstick the velcro straps or cut the tape along one side of the splint and unpeel it from the top of your finger.
2. Gently slide the splint off your finger. When your finger is removed from the splint it must be fully supported in a straight position either resting on a flat surface (such as a table) or by supporting the tip with your other hand. If the middle joint is not supported and is allowed to bend the healing tissues can be re-damaged and this will mean that you will need to wear a splint for longer or be left with a bent finger that cannot straighten .
3. Lift your finger off the table by its tip and get someone else to gently wash and dry on top and underneath it.
4. Secure the splint back on your finger by re-sticking the velcro straps or with new tape and making sure the finger is resting straight in it.

Exercises

You will need to do regular exercises with your injured finger as instructed by your therapist to help encourage gentle gliding of your repaired tendon as it continues to heal.

You will have 1 or 2 exercise splints made for you:

When removing your resting splint and putting on either of the exercise splints it is very important for you to put your hand flat on the table and to slide one splint off and slide the next one on.

Splint A: a shorter gutter splint that allows you to bend and straighten the tip of your finger only. You will need to do this exercise 10 - 20 times every hour.





You may already have a shorter splint that allows you to do the same kind of exercise, whilst remaining in the same splint.

Splint B: a gutter splint that allows you to bend the top two joints of the finger to a specific angle.



You will need to place the splint at the base of your finger and bend your finger down to meet the splint and then straighten your finger back to the starting position. Complete this exercise every 2 hours doing it 5 times.



It is very important to ensure you are able to fully straighten the middle joint on your finger and if you are unable to do so that you stop doing the exercises and put your resting splint back on. You must then contact your therapist for advice.

After you have finished your exercises you must put your resting splint back on.

- it is important that you do not stick your finger out but let it rest in line with the other fingers
- you need to check that the splint fits well and the finger is securely resting straight in the splint
- do not remove your splint at all until you have been shown how to do so
- if there are any problems with your splint you must contact your hand therapist for it to be checked.

What do I do if my finger becomes more painful?

Your finger may become painful if:

- it becomes swollen
- your wound becomes infected
- your splint or velcro straps become too tight.

If your finger becomes swollen you should keep your hand above the level of your heart, keep the splint on but loosen the straps. If the pain continues or you think your wound is infected you should contact the Therapist in the Plastic Outpatient Department or the staff on Odstock ward at night or at the weekend.

Attending the hospital for therapy support

You will need to come to the hospital to see a therapist for your finger to be checked and to ensure that the splint is fitting properly. How often you need to attend will depend on how your finger is reacting to the exercises. This level of support is necessary to help you to get the best result.

Can I work, play sport or drive?

You will be able to do most light everyday activities with your splint on. Our advice for driving is that it is your responsibility to ensure you are safe to drive with your splint on and you must inform your insurance company. You may be able to work with your splint on, but this will depend on your job. Please liaise with your therapist for further advice if unsure.

You should not do any sporting activities as this may cause your splint to come off and you will damage your finger again.

Contacts

If you have any concerns please contact:

Plastics Outpatients Therapy Department on: 01722 345530 during normal working hours and Odstock Ward: 01722 336262 ext. 3507 at other times.

