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

Customer Services Department

Livewell Southwest
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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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Fifth (little) finger metacarpal fracture Information & Advice



Minor Injuries Unit

Cumberland Centre
South Hams Hospital
Tavistock Hospital

This information leaflet is for people who have had a fracture to the little finger metacarpal.

What has happened to my hand?

You have broken the end of a bone in your hand near the knuckle.

The little and ring fingers have been strapped together to support the broken bones but to allow some movement of the knuckles.

What should I do now?

Keep the little and ring fingers strapped together for 3 weeks (the tape can be taken off in order to wash and fresh tape can be applied.) Discard the strapping after 3 weeks. No further treatment is necessary in most cases.

Gentle movement is a good thing, even if it is a little bit uncomfortable initially. This prevents the knuckle from becoming stiff and encourages swelling to settle.

You can start to use the hand for light activities but if your work involves very repetitive or strenuous use of the hand then you may need to alter what you do or, occasionally, take time off work.

You can take part in contact sports again after three weeks but we advise that you strap the fingers during sport for a further three weeks.

Take pain relief (Paracetamol and / or Ibuprofen) for the first 2 weeks after injury.

By the end of 3 weeks much of the movement range should have returned and you can exercise and stretch the knuckle a bit in order to improve the movement range - squeezing a ball of plasticine or poster putty is a helpful exercise.

What recovery can I expect?

In almost all cases these injuries heal very well although the knuckle may heal in a pushed down position. This does not affect the function of the hand.

You can expect to reach nearly full range of motion once the bone has completely healed.

Most of the swelling and pain should settle over the course of 3 weeks but can sometimes take up to a year to fully settle.

There may be a hard lump where the break is for approximately a year. This is a new bone which forms in order to mend the break and smooths out as the bone strengthens.

What problems can occur?

Very occasionally after injuries to the hand there can be swelling and pain which is prolonged and can lead to long term difficulties. Ordinarily, swelling and pain will worsen for a few days after injury and then start to improve.

Sometimes the little finger seems to drop down a bit or it rests slightly apart from the other fingers. This typically corrects itself. If this problem is still apparent after 3 months you should ask your GP to refer you back to the Plastic Surgery Department.