

*This fact sheet has been developed in consultation with the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Orthopaedic team and Consumers.*

*Information contained in this fact sheet is a guideline for care only. Please consult with your doctor or health professional to make sure that this information is right for you.*

**Metro North**  
Hospital and Health Service

### **Worries or concerns**

For any immediate concerns or questions regarding your injury please contact:

- **Your General Practitioner (GP).**  
They are able to speak directly to an Orthopaedic team at Redcliffe Hospital or Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital if required
- **13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)** for health advice, triage and referral from a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and at the cost of a local call. 13 HEALTH provides access to interpreting services for callers not confident with English.

**In a medical emergency go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call an ambulance (dial 000).**

## **MALLET FINGER**

Fact Sheet

## Your fracture

You have snapped or pulled the tendon at the end joint of the finger.

Your injury has been assessed as not requiring specialist orthopaedic care. You will likely make a good recovery.

## TREATMENT

For simple finger fractures, it is likely your finger will be “buddy” strapped to your next largest finger. You can remove the strapping to wash or if it gets dirty, but keep reapplying the tape for 2 – 3 weeks.

If a mallet finger injury, a splint may be applied to keep your finger straight. This should be worn at all times (even when sleeping) for 8 weeks.

It is important that your GP or treating clinician ensures your splint fits well. If you need a custom splint to fit your finger, they can refer you to a hand therapist.

Keep your strapping or splint dry to avoid skin irritation. Change the strapping if it becomes wet.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

### HEALING TIMEFRAME

- A simple finger fracture usually heals very well
- For a simple finger fracture, on average total healing can take 6 weeks  
If after 6 weeks you still have pain, swelling or difficulty moving your finger, please see your GP for advice.
- For a mallet finger, healing can take up to 12 weeks. If you have trouble using your finger please see your GP for advice.

### GETTING BACK TO NORMAL

- Maintain gentle movements of your fingers when possible to prevent stiffness. Make sure to keep your finger joints and wrist moving freely
- Elevate your hand when sitting to relieve swelling
- Gradually resume daily activities as pain allows
- It may take several weeks to regain full function of your finger
- You may experience slight swelling and stiffness (and in the case of mallet finger, a droop at the end of your finger) at the injury location permanently; this can unfortunately be a permanent feature but will not affect your function.

## PAIN RELIEF AND COMFORT

Regular pain relief such as paracetamol can be used.

### When can I...?

Play sport	Once out of splint
Lift heavy items	After 6 weeks
Return to work	Consult your doctor

*The above timeframes are a guide only and do not apply to all mallet finger injuries.*