

**Patient
Information**

5th Metacarpal Fracture

Introduction

This leaflet provides you with information following the broken bone in your hand. This is known as a 5th Metacarpal fracture (MCP) and is below your little finger. See Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: 5th Metacarpal fracture

About your 5th Metacarpal fracture

Usually, the bone remains in the correct place and should heal quickly with very little treatment.

It will take about 3 weeks for the pain to settle and for most of your hand function to return.

Your knuckle may look different afterwards and you may also notice some shortening of your little finger due to this injury.

Treatment

Finger strapping will provide the bone with the stability it needs to heal and will help reduce any pain. Additional tape can be bought at your local chemist and should be reapplied above and below the finger joints, to prevent any stiffness.

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You may have also been given a wrist splint. Separate instructions will be provided with the splint and it usually needs to be worn for 4 to 6 weeks. You will be able to use your hand during this time.

To ease any discomfort, we suggest that you take simple pain relief such as paracetamol, please follow the dosage instructions on the pack. Your pharmacist can advise about any other pain relief.

It is important that you bend and straighten your fingers and wrist several times every day to stop the joints from becoming stiff.

Smoking will delay the healing process so should be avoided. Details for help and support to stop smoking are at the end of this leaflet.

Any X-rays taken will be reviewed by a specialist doctor. If there is any concern that there may be a more serious injury, you will be contacted. Please make sure that the receptionist has your up-to-date contact details.

Returning to your usual activities

Within the following 6 weeks you should be able to increase your daily activities.

After 6 to 8 weeks, you can begin to lift heavier objects but this may cause some discomfort.

As the bone heals a lump will form at the site of the break, and the knuckle will not be as prominent (obvious) as before the injury.

Driving

You may not be insured to drive while your fingers have strapping in place or while wearing a splint. We recommend that you contact your insurance company to check when you are able to drive again.

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When to seek advice

You may not need a follow up appointment but if you have any concerns or if any of the following apply to you, please contact your GP for advice. Your GP will have access to view your X-rays.

- You cannot make a fist because your fingers cross over or they are too stiff.
- The pain gets worse or lasts more than 3 weeks.
- You are concerned about your hand.

Contact information

If you have any concerns about your hand, please seek advice from:

NHS 111

Tel: 111

Trauma Service

Tel: 0300 422 5269

Monday to Friday, 10:00am to 2:00pm

Email: ghn-tr.glostrauma@nhs.net

Further information

For support and advice to stop smoking, please visit the following websites.

NHS - Better Health

Website: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/

Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire

Website: <https://hlsqlos.org/stop-smoking/>

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>