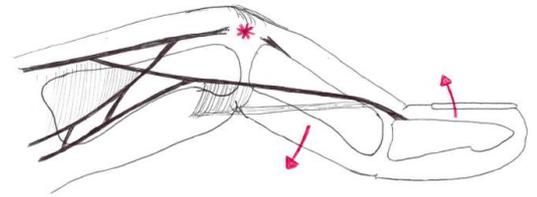


# Central slip injury

This leaflet offers more information about central slip injury to the finger. If you have further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

## What is the central slip?

There are several tendons in your finger that work together to straighten the finger. These tendons run along the side and the top of the finger. The tendon on the top of the finger attaches to the middle bone and is known as the central slip. Without the central slip working your finger may develop a deformity called a boutonniere (button-hole).



## What are the signs and symptoms of injury?

Injury to the central slip usually occurs from the finger being traumatically forced into a bend, e.g. being hit by a ball, or if the joint dislocates. If you have injured the central slip you may be unable to straighten the middle joint of your finger.

## Do I need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

You may need an x-ray to check if the bone is broken as well as the tendon being damaged. The treating doctor or therapist will also assess your finger movement, swelling and pain to confirm diagnosis.

A central slip injury can be due either to a fracture at the base of the middle bone (avulsion) or from tears in the fibres of the central slip itself (tendinous). Your therapist will explain which type of injury you have.

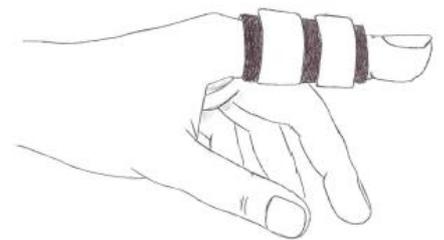
## What treatments are available?

You will be provided with a splint or a cast to the finger to keep the middle joint straight. This allows the tendon / fracture to heal in a good position.

Your finger will need to stay in the splint at all times for the next \_\_\_\_\_ weeks to let the tendon (and bone) heal.

If the splint doesn't fit, contact your hand therapist as soon as possible. Do not try to alter the splint yourself.

Keep the splint dry at all times. Your hand therapist will help with tips on this. If your finger does get wet, change the splint lining as soon as possible.



## What happens if I do not get treatment?

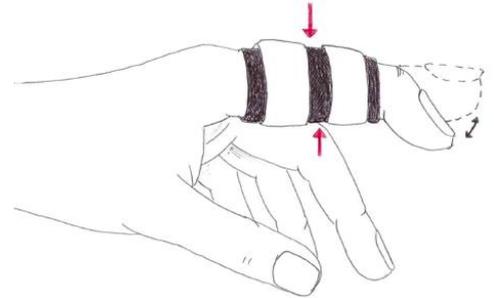
If you do not get treatment for a central slip injury, the middle joint of the finger will not be able to straighten without help and may stiffen into a boutonniere position. It will not heal on its own.

## Your exercises

It is important that the unaffected joints do not get stiff (especially the tip joint).

**For all exercises please keep your wrist bent gently forwards.**

- 1) Straighten all your fingers as much as you can
- 2) With the splint or cast on – using your unaffected hand to firmly hold the splint/cast between the thumb and finger then bend the tip joint as far as able and hold for three seconds before straightening it.



## How often should I do my exercises?

Please complete each exercise \_\_\_\_\_ times and hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds each time. Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.

## What problems should I look out for?

If you have any concerns, please contact the hand therapy department as soon as possible.

Some common problems to watch out for are:

- Skin may become sore under the splint
- Swelling may increase and make the splint/cast become too tight
- Swelling may decrease and make the splint/cast become too loose
- Your finger may start to sit in a bent position in the splint, instead of straight.

Bending the middle joint of the finger can cause further damage to the central slip, meaning you will have to start the splinting/casting treatment from the beginning.

## Additional instructions

### Swelling

Swelling (oedema) is the body's normal response to an injury and may be present with a central slip injury. It is important to minimise this by keeping your hand elevated as much as possible. Your therapist may also give you a compression wrap to wear over your finger to assist with reducing the swelling. Please use the compression wrap as follows:

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- You should use your unaffected fingers for light activities only.
  - If you notice the finger is not straightening, stop the exercises and contact the department as soon as possible.
  - No contact sports or heavy lifting until twelve weeks after starting treatment.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the information provided in this leaflet, please feel free to discuss them with your therapist at your next appointment. For more urgent queries the team can be contacted in the **treatment enquiries** phone number listed below.

Your therapist's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Treatment enquiries:** 020 8725 1038 (answer phone only)  
**Appointments:** 020 8725 3000

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)

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## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111



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