

Metacarpal Phalangeal (MCP) Joint Replacement Programme

Dynamic splinting programme

This leaflet offers information about your MCP joint replacement surgery and the rehabilitation process following the operation. It is very important that you follow the advice of your surgeon and hand therapist to ensure that you do not damage your joints and that you achieve a good range of movement. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of the team involved in your care.

What is joint replacement surgery?

Joint replacement (also called arthroplasty) is used in the hand for many different reasons. This surgery can help to reduce pain, correct deformities and provide increased movement and function.

Metacarpal phalangeal (MCP) joint replacement refers to the replacement of joints between the metacarpal bones (which form the base of the hands) and the phalanges (the bones in the fingers). No joint replacement is ever going to be as effective as an original healthy joint; however with good surgery and hard work after your operation, you can achieve a good result.

You will need to consider that the disease process of osteoarthritis/rheumatoid arthritis is still continuing, even with your new joints, so it is essential to protect your joint replacements as much as possible.

What happens during surgery?

When the joint is replaced, the bone is smoothed back and a hole is drilled down the centre of each of the bones.

An implant is inserted and used to provide a space between each bone, which creates a new joint surface (See Figure A)

The hand therapy process

A new joint takes around 12 weeks to fully heal. Within this time, you must try to achieve the maximum amount of movement possible, especially in bending. Your hand therapist will monitor your treatment and adapt your rehabilitation programme according to your needs.

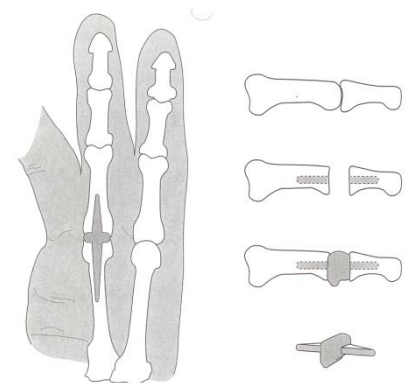


Figure A

Weeks one to four:

In the first week after your surgery you will be provided with two splints. The first splint is known as a dynamic splint (Figure B) which aims to protect your joint replacements while allowing movement through your fingers. The second splint is known as a resting splint (Figure C) which is worn at night time to support your hand in a safe position when sleeping.

Your hand therapist will see you weekly at this stage to alter your splints as your swelling decreases and your movement improves with your exercises.

At this stage, you must not use your hand for any activities other than the exercises recommended by your therapist, as this may cause damage to your new joints.

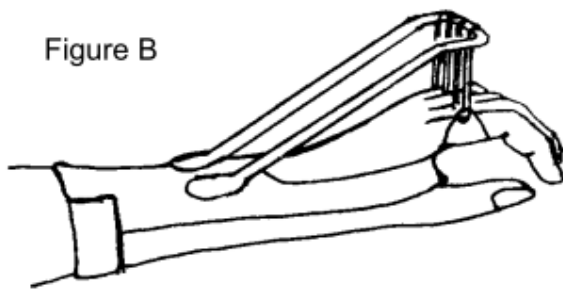


Figure B

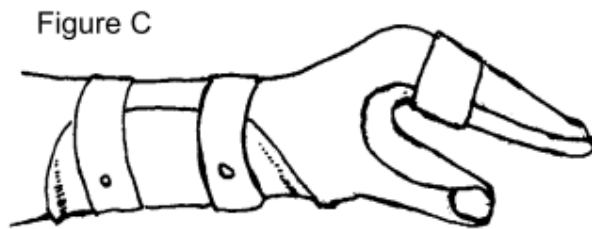


Figure C

Exercises for weeks one to four:

1. With your **dynamic splint** on, gently bend at your big knuckles, keeping the rest of the joints straight. Relax your fingers and let the splint pull your fingers back up to a straight position.
2. With your **dynamic splint** on, keep your big knuckles straight and bend the small joints of your fingers.
3. Gently loosen the tension on your splint (your therapist will show you how to do this) and then gently bring all your fingers into a bend i.e.: make a fist.
4. Bring your thumb across to touch the base of your little finger.
5. When changing over the splints, take some time to gently bend and straighten your wrist. You must remember to use your non-affected hand to keep the little finger side of your hand supported. Your therapist will show you how to do this.

How often should I do my exercises?

Please complete each exercise _____ times and hold for _____ seconds each time.
Repeat _____ times per day.

General Instructions

After your surgery please ensure that you:

- Try to keep your arm elevated where possible to minimise your swelling.
- Wear your splints at night and when resting your hand during the day between exercises.
- Alternate your splints every 12-24 hours as instructed by your therapist.
- Move your elbow and shoulder regularly to minimise stiffness.
- Complete any scar massage as directed by your therapist.

Please ensure that you **do not**:

- Try to use your hand for any activities until you are advised to do so by your therapist.
- Drive – until recommended to do so by your therapist.

Contact us

If you have any questions about your recovery after joint replacement surgery, please contact the hand therapy team on 020 8725 1038 (answer phone only, please leave a message and someone will get back to you as soon as possible).

For appointment enquiries, please contact 020 8725 0007.

Your therapist's name is _____

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

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 wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** 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

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

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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