

Thumb Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) Injury

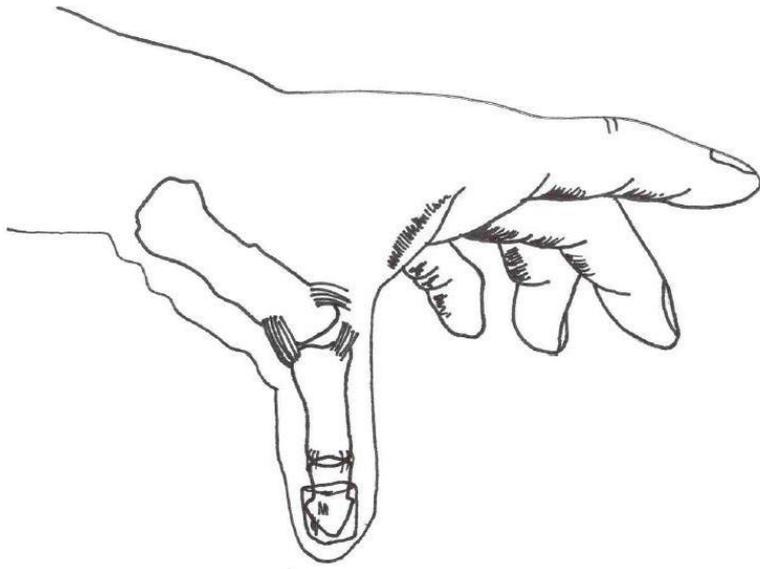
This leaflet offers more information about the management of a thumb UCL injury and explains what to do to help your recovery. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is a UCL injury and why have I got it?

Your UCL is a strong ligament at the base of the thumb in the web space between the thumb and the index finger (see picture).

The ligament can be damaged if the thumb is forced away from your hand e.g. If your hand is hit with a ball, or you fall while skiing. This is why a UCL injury is sometimes called 'skiers thumb'.

The injury causes pain and tenderness at the base of your thumb, because the ligament has been either partially torn (sprained), or a small piece of bone has been pulled off by the ligament (avulsed).



What treatments are available?

Depending on the severity of your injury and individual requirements of your hand you may need an operation to repair the UCL.

The aim of treatment is to aid healing and prevent long term stiffness, so your thumb works properly and you can carry out actions safely e.g. lifting a glass.

You may need to wear a splint to get better; your hand therapist will let you know.

Your splint must be worn full time for _____ weeks.

Contact your therapist if your splint does not fit - do not try to alter it yourself.

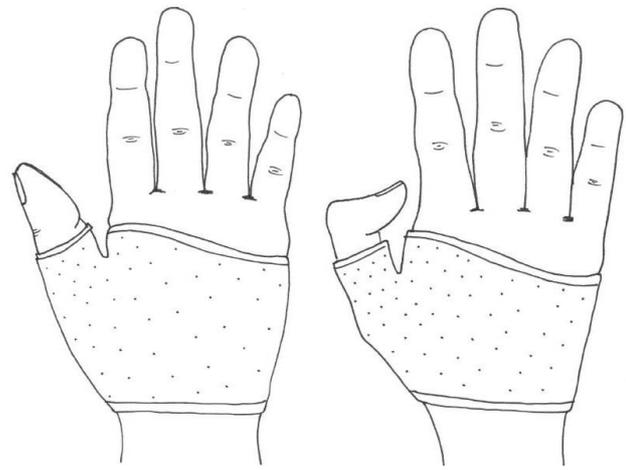
You must not get your splint wet, so you should shower with a bag over your hand.

You must not drive with the splint on, so while you are wearing it full-time you cannot drive at all.

Your exercises

Make sure you do your exercises exactly as your therapist has said.

1. Bend and straighten the tip of the thumb with the splint on (see picture).
2. Bend and straighten the fingers over the splint.
3. Keep your wrist, elbow and shoulder moving.



How often should I do my exercises?

Complete each exercise _____ times and hold each position for _____ seconds.

Repeat _____ times a day.

Remember

- Only exercise exactly as your therapist has said
- **Do not** drive.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about thumb UCL injury, please talk to your therapist at your next appointment. For urgent questions, contact treatment enquiries on 020 8725 1038 (answerphone, please leave a message). For appointments 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 Wing (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

