

# Finger Joint Injury in Children

This leaflet explains more about common finger joint injuries in children. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your child's care.

## What are finger joint injuries and why has my child got one?

Injuries to the joints of children's fingers are common.

The middle joint of the finger (proximal inter-phalangeal or PIP joint) is particularly prone to injury.

This leaflet gives information about PIP joint injury and how to help your child recover.

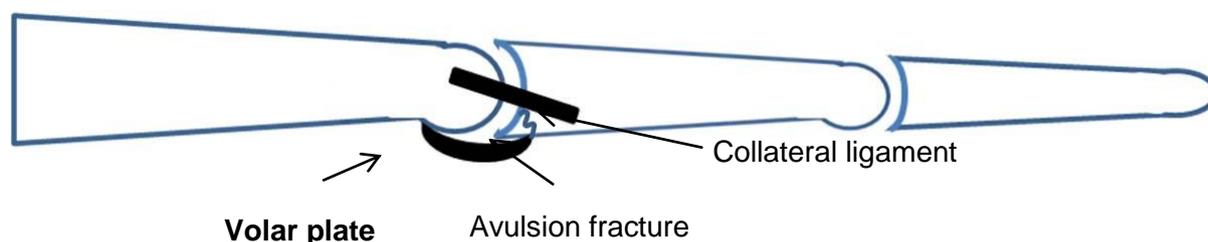
Joints are supported by ligaments which keep them stable and stop them from going out of their normal positions.

There is a wide, flat ligament called the **volar plate** on the front of each finger joint and thinner, longer **collateral ligaments** on either side of each joint.

## What are the different injuries that can happen?

Fingers can be **sprained** when the ligaments are over-stretched, for example if a finger is forced backwards and/or sideways when hit by a ball.

An **avulsion fracture** can happen if the volar plate ligament is injured and breaks away a small piece of bone (see picture):



## Side view of finger showing an avulsion fracture and the supporting ligaments around the PIP joint.

A **dislocation** happens when one or more of the ligaments is stretched too far and the joint gets stuck out of position. Dislocations usually need to be put back into place by a medical professional at hospital.

## How will the injury heal?

Children's finger joint injuries normally take about **six** weeks to heal.

During this time it is normal for the finger to be tender, swollen and slightly hard to move.

It is very important to prevent further injury during this healing period. Your child may be given a set of buddy straps to hold the injured finger to the finger next to it or they may have made a finger splint which should be worn until the pain is gone and they can fully move their finger.

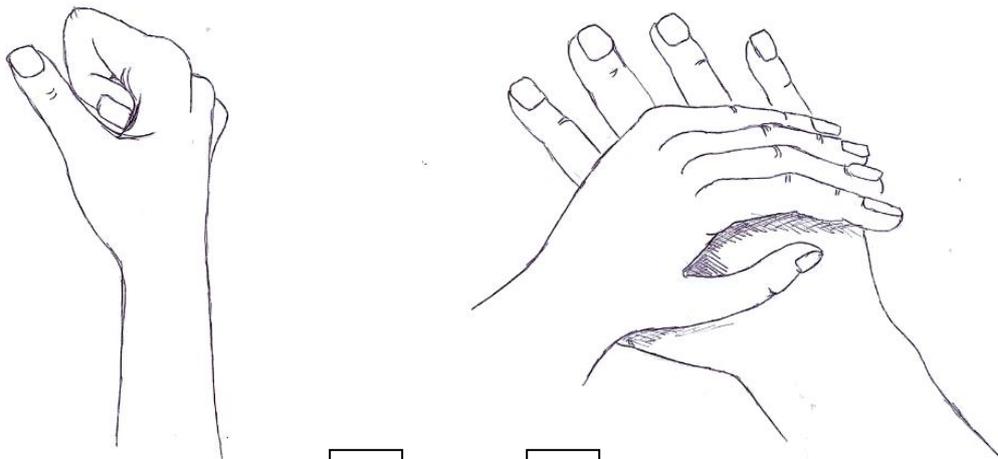
Your child should avoid sport for the first six weeks after injury.

## What exercises should my child do to help their recovery?

It is important that your child does the following exercises while they recover from their injury, to make sure they get full movement of their finger back.

Your child's therapist will advise how they should do their exercises and how often.

1. Remove your child's splint or buddy straps
2. Ask them to close their fingers into a tight fist
3. Then ask them to flatten their fingers out straight onto a flat surface.



Repeat these movements  times,  times each day.

It is normal for your child to feel some discomfort during exercises and their therapist will advise on how much effort they should put in.

## Contact us

If you have any questions about your child's finger joint injury or concerns that they are not recovering as expected, please contact the plastic surgery team on 020 8725 5855 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm) to arrange a follow-up appointment in the children's trauma clinic. You can also contact the hand therapy team on 020 8725 1038 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm). Out of hours, please contact St George's switchboard on 020 8725 1000 and request bleep 7050 to speak with the on-call plastics doctor.

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)

## 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](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

### 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](http://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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