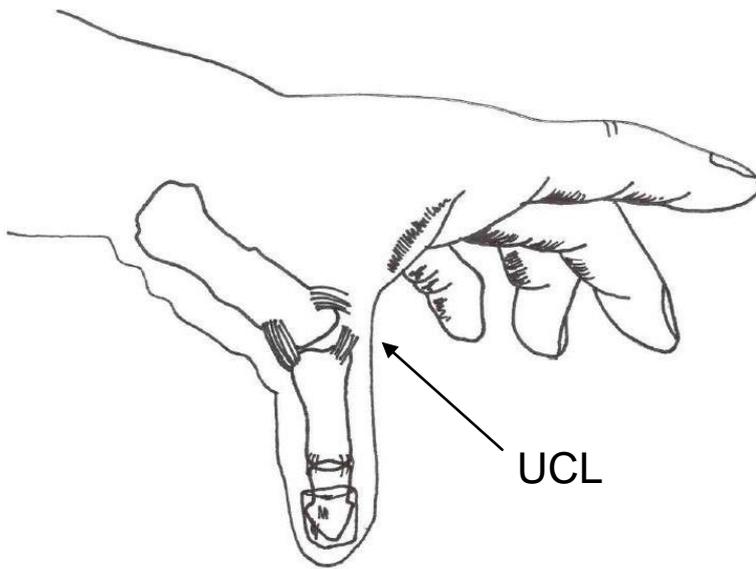


Thumb Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) Injury

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 your therapist.



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

Your UCL is a 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 'skier's 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?

The aim of treatment is to aid healing and minimise long term stiffness, so your thumb works properly and you can carry out actions safely e.g. lifting a glass. Depending on the severity of your injury and the individual requirements of your hand you may need an operation to repair the UCL. However, many UCL injuries can be managed conservatively with supportive splinting.

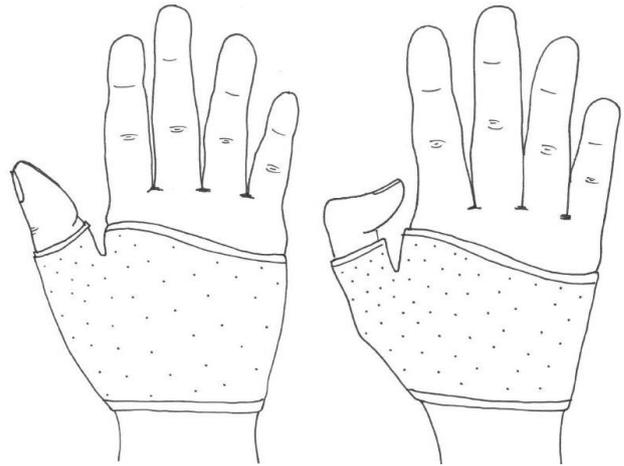
How should I look after my splint?

A thermoplastic splint has been made for you to help protect your thumb and keep it immobilised while the ligament heals. You must wear this splint all of the time for up to six weeks, even in bed or in the bath or shower. You must not get this splint hot, wet or try to alter it in any way.

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** until advised to do so by your therapist.

Contact us

If you have any questions regarding 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 on the **treatment enquiries** telephone number listed below.

Your therapist's name is: _____

Treatment enquiries: 020 8725 1038 (answer phone only)

Appointments: 020 8725 0007

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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