

# Fractured Metacarpal

## What has happened?

You have broken or fractured a bone in your hand called a metacarpal. This type of injury is painful but usually heals quickly with very little loss of function. Since the injury is stable (the broken bone moves as one), there is no need for plaster or immobilisation. Strapping the finger to the finger beside it (buddy strapping) or using a splint can help relieve pain.

## What should I expect during recovery?

### Week 1

The fracture will be painful, but this pain is tolerable with the finger buddy strapped or in a splint

There may be considerable swelling and bruising, and this bruising can track into the palm, down into the wrist and up to the fingers

You should keep your fingers, wrist, elbow and shoulder all moving to avoid stiffness

### Weeks 2-4

The fracture pain should slowly improve, and by the end of week 4 there should be very little pain

Bruising and swelling will have settled by around week 3.

You should begin the **KEY EXERCISES** as soon as you are comfortable

Start to use your hand normally as soon as possible. This is quite safe, as the fracture is stable.

Although the bone heals quickly, it can take up to around 6 months for the hand to feel normal again.

## Are there any complications of this injury?

Most metacarpal fractures result in a 'dropped knuckle', where the normal contour of the bone is lost, and there is usually a lump on the back of the hand. Although this makes the hand look different, it is unusual for this to give rise to symptoms.

If you are unable to tick the boxes on the checklist, you should phone the number provided or contact us via our website.

## What does the Xray look like?



Fracture of the 5<sup>th</sup> metacarpal neck

## KEY EXERCISES



## Checklist

**Week 1** - I can make a full fist

**Week 2** - I can use my hand for everyday activity

**Week 4** - I have returned to work

## TOP TIPS

**Stop smoking! This will help healing.**

**Take vitamin C**

**Try to keep moving your fingers**

## Contact the Fife Virtual Hand Clinic Team

By telephone: 01383 623623. Ex. 22441

By email: [fife-uhb.fifehandservice@nhs.net](mailto:fife-uhb.fifehandservice@nhs.net)

Via our website: [www.fifevirtualhandclinic.co.uk](http://www.fifevirtualhandclinic.co.uk)

