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Emergency Department
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital
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Quality Development, Foresterhill



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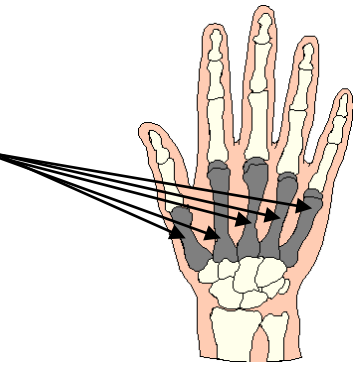
Metacarpal fractures

***Information for
children, parents and carers***

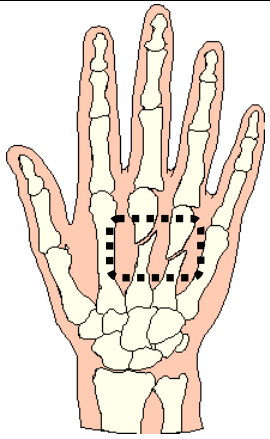


**Emergency Department
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital**

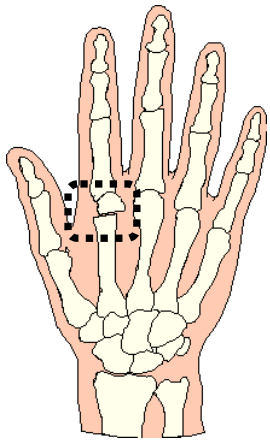
metacarpal
bones



Bones of the hand (metacarpals shaded)



Shaft fractures



Neck fracture

Contact telephone number

If you have any concerns or if your child still has significant pain after 4 weeks, please contact us on the number below. We'll then arrange an appointment to review their progress.

**Emergency Department
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB25 2ZG
☎ 01224 552041**

What is a metacarpal fracture?

This is an injury to one of the 4 bones in the palm of the hand up to the knuckles of the fingers (see diagrams opposite).

A "neck" fracture is just below the knuckle, a "shaft" fracture is towards the middle of the bone.

In your / your child's case, the fracture is subtle and thought to be very stable. It is therefore at very low risk of any movement or complication.

An injury of this kind usually heals well with the following treatment and no follow-up is required. They do not result in long term problems.

How is it treated?

Splint and/or strapping

We place your child's injured hand in a splint or tape their fingers together (called "buddy-strapping"). Occasionally we use both of these methods for extra support. This treatment should be used for 2 weeks.

If strapping is required, we'll give you a supply so you can change the strapping at home. You can give your child regular simple pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, always following the instructions on the bottle or packet.

If we've used a splint for your child's injury, do not remove it during these 2 weeks.

Keep your child's arm kept dry when they are bathing or showering.

If you get the strapping wet or it comes loose or falls off, please replace it right away after drying your child's fingers. Placing a layer of gauze between the fingers is a good idea to reduce sweat rash.

After 2 weeks wearing a splint and/or strapping

After the first 2 weeks you can take off the splint and/or strapping. The wrist and fingers may feel stiff. Any pain should be improving by now and your child can gradually get back to normal over the following weeks.

What should we expect?

- Your child should avoid rough play and sports for the time they are in the splint/strapping. It is important they are careful at school especially at break times.
- It is common for children to have some discomfort as their hand begins to move. Simple pain relief should allow increased use and manage this discomfort.
- Some discomfort may last for up to 2 weeks after the splint comes off but this should gradually improve.

Will they need physiotherapy?

Once the splint comes off, encourage your child to move their hand and wrist as much they are able. After this type of injury, children don't usually need physiotherapy.

When can they return to sports?

Non-contact sports such as swimming and running can be started once the splint comes off.

Your child should avoid contact sports such as rugby, football or basketball for at least 2 weeks after the splint comes off. They can return to playing these sports **gradually** after this time.