

## Fracture Clinic Patient Information Leaflet

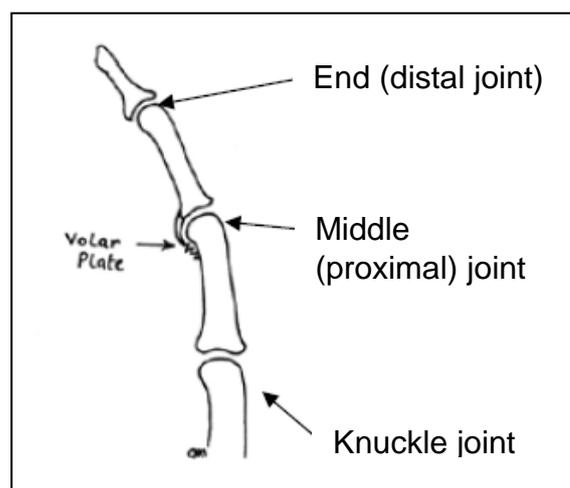
# Advice after a 'volar plate' injury of the finger

## The Injury

Your fingers are made up of several small bones and each of these is called a 'phalanx'. These bones are connected with strong ligaments that support the finger; one of these structures is called the volar plate. You have strained this structure. This is a common injury.

The symptoms following this type of injury often include:

- Pain straight after an injury
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Deformity at the site of injury
- Difficulty moving the hand and gripping



## What happens now?

If you have had your finger strapped, or it has been put into a splint, you should remove this immediately.

These injuries almost always heal by themselves with time but the affected finger can become permanently stiff if it is protected too much in the early stages. Your priority must be to regain normal range of movement in the hand as soon as possible, even if this is painful. You should contact the fracture clinic if you are still struggling with movement of the finger four weeks after the injury.

## What should I do at home?

- Use over the counter pain killers as needed to allow movement and exercise of the finger
- You should avoid bending your finger backwards at the injured joint.
- You can return to work or school as soon as pain allows and you can do your normal duties

## How long will it take to heal?

Most volar plate injuries heal without any problems in about six weeks. You should regain movement quickly with regular exercise (within four weeks). However, it may take several months for your symptoms to settle completely – these can include pain or discomfort, stiffness, decreased strength and swelling. The joint can be enlarged for several months. The injury may take longer to heal if you suffer from diabetes or if you smoke.

For advice on stopping smoking please visit [www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree) or discuss this with your GP.

## Exercises

You need to do ten repetitions of these exercises three to four times a day; you must start them immediately. Warm water and massage will significantly help with your exercise by reducing pain.



1. **Bend the tips of your fingers.**



2. **Bring your fingers into your palm.**



**3. Curl your fingers into a fist.**

**If you have any worries or concerns please contact one of the following:**

**Virtual Fracture Clinic Helpline 01225 821668 or Fracture Clinic 01225 825602**

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG  
01225 428331 [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email [ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net) or telephone 01225 825656 or 826319.