



Information for
patients and
carers

Fingertip, Nailbed and Digital Nerve Injuries

Hand Therapy Advice

Fingertip, nailbed and injuries to finger/thumb nerves:

You have been given this booklet because you injured a finger or thumb. Please read and consider the advice below. We hope you find it helpful in your recovery.

Swelling:

Following your injury your hand may swell. This may cause pain and stiffness. This is a normal reaction, but it is important to keep the swelling down. You should find that the swelling begins to settle within the first 10 days. Swelling can be decreased by keeping your hand up to shoulder height. For example, when seated use cushions or pillows on an arm rest to raise your hand.



Exercises: To be performed 10 times every 2-3 waking hours

These will avoid stiffness -

- 1) Move your wrist forward and back, side to side
- 2) Bend and straighten your elbow
- 3) Roll your shoulder gently in circles
- 4) Move your unaffected fingers fully
- 5) Gently move your affected finger within the limits of pain and your dressings

Massage:

Scars are produced as a part of the body's normal healing

Massaging scars helps them to soften and allows better movement. Prickling feelings to the skin can be normal after this injury. Massage will help to reduce this sensitivity.

When your wound has healed use lotion to massage into the skin and scar:

- Use a pea-sized amount of non-perfumed moisturiser
- Massage onto the scar firmly, in a circular motion for five minutes
- This is advised four times a day whilst the scar continues to have a pink appearance.

Desensitisation:

After the wound has healed, finger scars can become hypersensitive to touch. This may feel like pins and needles and is uncomfortable. To make this better, use a range of textures over the scar:

- Using a soft texture and starting from where the skin feels normal, gently stroke towards the sensitive area
- When you can tolerate soft textures progress to something rougher
- This is advised four times a day, for 5-10 minutes at a time

Return to normal activities:

It is important to return to normal everyday activities once your wound has healed. Sometimes wearing a glove or gel-cap over the sensitive area can help for specific tasks.

If you have numbness in any part of the finger/thumb, be extra careful near hot, cold or sharp objects to avoid further injury.

More information:

- If you have any questions about getting back to work, discuss them in dressings appointments and with your GP
- We hope you find this helpful. Please adhere to the advice in this booklet for 6 weeks. If you have not noticed any improvement of

your symptoms or are still affected by your symptoms by this time, then please contact the hand therapy department for an appointment with a therapist

- If we do not hear from you within 6 weeks, then you will be discharged from the hand therapy service

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact Hand Therapy at **Royal Preston Hospital on 01772 522876** or **Chorley District Hospital on 01257 245757**

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Department: Core Therapies

Division: Diagnostics and clinical support

Production date: July 2023

Review date: July 2026

JR 994 v1