Hand therapy after a metacarpal fracture

The aim of this information sheet is to answer some of the questions you may have about recovering from a metacarpal fracture (a broken bone in your hand). If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your hand therapist.

What can I expect?

Metacarpal fractures usually heal well. You will gradually regain your normal hand movements and grip strength. The knuckle of your broken finger may change shape. This is permanent and a common side-effect of this type of injury.

You may also notice a lump at the point where your bone fractured. This is soft bone produced during the healing process. This is another common side-effect, but it tends to reduce after several months.

Will I be in pain?

You may continue to experience some pain when pushing on the fracture area for four to six weeks after your injury. You can take over-the-counter pain medicines as and when you need them. You should avoid any activities that cause you pain.

Will I need to do any special exercises?

It is important to keep all your joints moving while your hand heals. Your therapist will give you exercises - including some written exercise information - to help you regain full movement in your hand.

Can I do everyday activities with my damaged hand?

You should start using your hand, with the splint on, for low impact activities.

For example:
- tying your shoelaces
- handling money
- brushing your teeth
- using a remote control

You can also try getting dressed without the splint on.

You should / should not continue to wear your splint at night when you sleep and for protection when you are in crowded places.

It is now weeks after your fracture.
You should stop using your splint / buddy straps from
When can I return to work?

It depends on the type of work you do:
• **Low impact work** - for example, office based activities.
  You can return to work ________ after your surgery
• **Medium impact work** – for example, house work, waiter/waitress.
  You can return to work ________________ after your surgery.
• **Heavy, manual work** – for example, builders, gardeners, care assistants.
  You can return to work ten weeks after your injury.

When can I start playing contact sports again?

You should not play contact sports for ten weeks following your injury.

Will I need a follow-up appointment?

Your therapist will make you a follow-up appointment before you leave the department, only if it is needed. The therapist may tell you that your injury will carry on getting better with time, so you won’t need any further appointments. However, if you ever have any problems, such as pain, swelling or reduced movement you can contact your therapist using the phone numbers below.

How can I get more advice from the hand therapist?

If you have any questions or concerns about your fracture, ongoing swelling or if your hand remains stiff please contact Robyn on **083 650 3022** between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday.