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# Fractured Fifth Metacarpal

## Paediatric A&E Department

# Fractured Fifth Metacarpal

## WHAT IS IT?

The doctor who examined your child has diagnosed a fractured fifth metacarpal. This injury is sometimes known as a “boxer’s fracture” since on most occasions it is produced by hitting someone or something.

## HOW WILL IT BE TREATED?

Your child may have had an x-ray examination, but in most people we can make the diagnosis without x-rays.

The fracture always heals by itself so treatment is just aimed at making it a little more comfortable. Sometimes your child will be given a sling to wear to help reduce the swelling during the first 24 hours.

## PAIN RELIEF

When you are at home a mild pain killer such as Paracetamol (Calpol) or Ibuprofen can be used as required which may help to mobilise effectively. Follow the instructions given with these regarding dosage and frequency.

## NORMAL ACTIVITIES

Your child can start light activities immediately but the fracture itself does not heal for about six weeks, so contact sports must be left until then.

The most important thing in the first few days is to try and get the fingers moving as much as possible. If your child’s fingers become stiff they will be very difficult to get moving again.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

As your child’s hand improves you will notice two things. Firstly there will be a lump on the back of the hand near the knuckle of the little finger. This is normal and occurs partly because the broken bone has bent slightly. It also develops as the body forms new bone around the fracture to help it to heal. The lump will smooth out over a year or two.

The second thing that you may notice is that, at first, the little finger will not straighten out as much as the other fingers. This should correct over the next few months as your child exercises their hand and the little finger will straighten in time.

## FOLLOW UP

You have been given an appointment to come back for follow up. However if you are worried about it before then please see your General Practitioner or come back to A&E.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Paediatric Accident and Emergency Department  
St. Peter's Hospital  
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Telephone 01932 872000

For reassurance and advice please contact NHS Direct on: 0845 4647

The following website gives useful advice: [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

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## Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email [pals@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@asph.nhs.uk). If you still remain concerned please contact our Complaints Manager on 01932 722612 or email [complaints@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@asph.nhs.uk).

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