

Finger Fracture

You may believe a broken finger is a minor injury, but without proper treatment it may cause functional deficits. The bones in a normal hand line up precisely, letting you perform many specialized functions like grasping a pen or manipulating small objects in your palm. When you fracture a finger bone, it may put your whole hand out of alignment. Without treatment, your broken finger might stay stiff and painful. Medical evaluation is recommended.

Signs of a fractured finger

- Swelling.
- Tenderness.
- Inability to move it completely.
- Deformity.

Diagnosis

If you think you broke your finger, tell your doctor right away exactly what happened and when. You have three bones in each finger and two in each thumb. Your doctor must not only determine which, but how, the bone fractured. This will dictate your treatment options. Your doctor may want to see how your fingers line up when you extend your hand or make a fist. Does any finger overlap its neighbor? Angled in the wrong direction? Look too short? Your doctor may X-ray both of your hands for comparison.

Treatment and rehabilitation

Your doctor may need to put your broken bone back into place, usually without surgery. Sometimes you need pins, screws or wire to hold it together, especially if you have a complicated injury. You may need a splint or cast to hold your finger straight and protect it from further injury while it heals. Sometimes your doctor may splint the fingers next to the fractured one for support. During follow-up visits you may need more X-rays as you heal so your doctor can check your progress.

Doing simple exercises directed by your orthopaedic surgeon, will help reduce the finger's stiffness and swelling. You may be required to see a physical therapist if warranted.