

## Hand therapy department

---

# Digital nerve repairs

You have injured one (or more) of the small nerves in your fingers. These are called digital nerves. These nerves enable your fingers to feel (for example pressure, sharp and blunt objects and temperature both hot and cold). The injured digital nerve(s) have been repaired by surgery.

This sheet describes the recovery process and things you should and should not do while your digital nerve(s) are healing. If you need further information or advice, please do not hesitate to call your hand therapist.

### How long will it take to get better?

You will need to wear a bandage/splint for \_\_\_\_ days, to protect the repaired nerve(s). Following the surgery, each nerve fibre will need to re-grow. The average growth rate is approximately 1mm per day, so depending where the site of the injury was, it may take months for the nerve(s) to re-grow to the fingertip(s).

### Will my finger go back to how it was before the injury?

Occasionally some of the nerve fibres may not re-grow to the fingertip(s), so it is always possible that the sensation in your finger(s) may not return to normal.

While the nerve is re-growing, you may experience some strange sensations in your hand such as pins and needles, tingling or electric shocks. All of these sensations are normal following a nerve injury. While there is still a lack of sensation you will need to be very careful so you do not further injure your finger(s).

### Do

- ✓ Keep your arm/hand in the air to minimise swelling.
- ✓ Lift your arm above your head regularly to maintain shoulder movement.
- ✓ Bend and straighten your elbow regularly to maintain movement.
- ✓ Keep your bandage/splint on at all times until it is removed by your doctor.
- ✓ Do the exercises that your hand therapist has shown you to prevent unaffected joints (i.e. other finger(s), wrist) from becoming stiff.
- ✓ Contact your hand therapist immediately if your hand/finger(s) become swollen, painful, hot/red or purple/cold. If it is outside of office hours then go to your nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department.

## Don't

- ✗ Do not remove the bandage/splint yourself.
- ✗ Do not get your hand wet while the stitches are in place.

**You should attend hand therapy sessions regularly to be taught the best exercises to help you in your recovery.**

### Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the advice given on removal of your splint, please contact the **hand therapy department** on **020 7188 4172**, Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm.

## Useful sources of information

### Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**t:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'      **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's      **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

**t:** 020 7188 8815      **fax:** 020 7188 5953

### NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

### NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future

Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years. To join:

**t:** 0848 143 4017      **e:** [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk)      **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk)

**Leaflet number: 1527VER2**

Date published: February 2015

Review date: February 2018

© 2015 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust