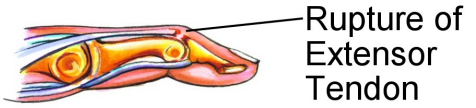
Mallet Finger

A mallet, or jammed, finger occurs when the end of a straightened finger or thumb receives a blow (often from a ball). This causes a disruption (tearing) of the extensor *tendon* (cord like structure which attaches muscle to bone) that straightens the end of your finger. The last joint in your finger will droop and you cannot extend it. Sometimes this is associated with a small *fracture* (break in bone) of the base of the end bone (*phalange*) in your finger. It usually takes 4 to 5 weeks to heal.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the sore finger for 15 to 20 minutes 3 to 4 times per day for 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin.
- If you have a finger splint, wear your splint as directed.
  - You may remove the splint to wash your finger or as directed.
  - If your splint is off, do not try to bend the tip of your finger.
  - Put your splint back on as soon as possible. If your finger is numb or tingling, the splint is probably too tight. You can loosen it so it is comfortable.
- Move the part of your injured finger that is not covered by the splint several times a day.
- Take medications as directed by your caregiver. Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- IMPORTANT: follow up with your caregiver or keep or call for any appointments with specialists as directed. The failure to follow up could result in chronic pain and / or disability.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have increased pain or swelling.
- You notice coldness of your finger.
- After treatment you still cannot extend your finger.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

Your finger is swollen and very red, white, blue, numb, cold, or tingling.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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