Crush Injuries, Fingers or Toes

With a crush injury to a finger or toe, the tissues have been damaged by being squeezed. When this happens the tissues in the finger or toe is damaged. Because of this there will be bleeding into the tissues and there will be swelling. Often there may be blood accumulation (collection) under the skin. When this happens the skin on the finger often dies and may slough off (shed) a week to ten days later. Usually new skin is growing underneath. If the injury has been too severe and the tissue does not survive, the damaged tissue may begin to turn black over several days. Wounds which occur because of the crushing may be sutured (stitched). Nails involved are often lost. These usually grow back over several weeks. X-rays may be taken to see if there is boney injury. Breaks in the bone *(fractures*) may be treated with splinting, depending on the fracture. Often no treatment is required for fractures of the last bone in the fingers or toes.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- The crushed part should be held above the heart or center of the chest as much as possible for the first several days or as directed. This helps with pain and lessens swelling. Less swelling makes it more likely that the crushed part has the best chance of surviving.
- You may use ice for twenty minutes, four times per day for the first two days.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Use your injured part only as directed, and see your caregiver as directed.
- Change dressings as directed.
- If your caregiver has given you a follow-up appointment, it is very important to keep that appointment. Not keeping the appointment could result in a chronic or permanent injury, pain, and disability. If there is any problem keeping the appointment, you must call back to this facility for assistance.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound area.
- Pus is coming from the wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- There is a breaking open of a *wound* (edges not staying together) after the sutures have been removed.
- You develop increasing pain.
- If you are unable to move the injured finger or toe.

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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