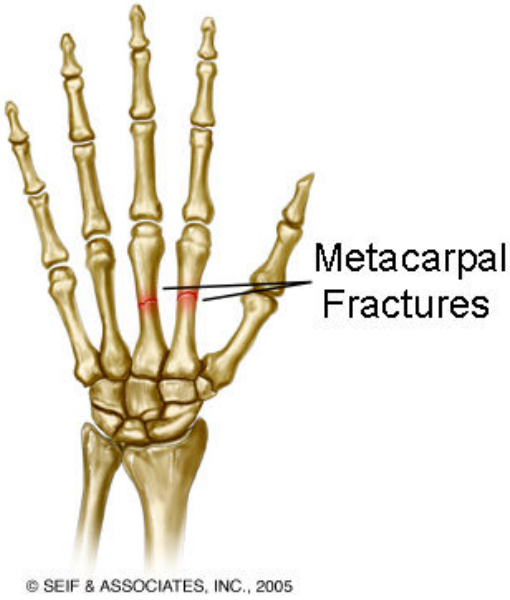
Metacarpal Fractures
(Break in Bones of Hand)

Fractures of metacarpals are breaks in the bones of the hand. They extend from the knuckles to the wrist. These bones can break in many ways. There are different ways of treating these fractures.



HOME CARE

- Follow your doctor's advice about:
  - Being active
  - Getting physical therapy.
  - Driving a car.
- Only exercise as instructed by your doctor.
- Keep the injured hand elevated above the level of your heart.

- If a plaster, fiberglass, or pre-formed **splint** was applied:
  - Wear your splint as directed and until you are examined again.
  - Apply ice to the injury for 15 to 20 minutes each hour while awake for the first 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a thin towel between the bag of ice and your hand.
  - Do not get your splint wet. Protect it during bathing with a plastic bag.
  - You may loosen the elastic bandage around the splint if your fingers start to get numb, tingle, get cold or turn blue.
  - If the splint is **plaster**, do not lean it on hard surfaces or put pressure on it for 24 hours after it is put on.

- If a plaster or fiberglass **cast** was applied:
  - Do not try to scratch the skin under the cast.
  - Check the skin around the cast every day. You may put lotion on red or sore areas.
  - Keep your cast dry. Put a plastic bag around your cast when you take a bath. Do not put your cast into the water.
  - Move the fingers of your casted hand several times a day.

- Only take medicine as directed by your doctor.
- Follow-up as directed by your doctor. This is very important in order to avoid permanent injury, disability, or chronic pain.

GET HELP IF:

- Increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from beneath your cast or splint.
- Redness, swelling, or increasing pain from beneath your cast or splint.
- Pus coming from beneath your cast or splint.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your doctor suggests.
- A foul smell coming from beneath your cast or splint.
- You have a problem moving any of your fingers.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have problems breathing.
- You have any allergy problems.

If you do not have a window in your cast for observing the wound, a discharge or minor bleeding may show up as a stain on the outside of your cast. Report these findings to your doctor.

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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