

Prairie



Orthopaedic & Plastic Surgery

Mallet Finger (Baseball Finger, Drop Finger)

The injury to your finger is that of a closed separation of the extensor tendon insertion. Splint treatment has a high degree of success but it is important you maintain the extended or straight position of the tip of the finger at all times. If you find it necessary to change the splint, it is important not to let the end of the finger drop down into the bent or flexed position.

The usual duration of treatment with the splint full time (24 hours per day) is 8 to 10 weeks. If for some reason the fingertip bends or flexes during that period of time, you should start over with 8 to 10 weeks of full-time extension of the end of the finger. You will be checked in the office at least once during the treatment phase in order to insure that you have no questions and that there are no problems with the splint. It is sometimes necessary to move to a smaller or different type of splint if your skin becomes red or raw or if the swelling decreases and the splint becomes loose and thus ineffective for treatment.

At the end of the 10-week period the splint may be removed for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening for one week and then two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening during the second week. During the third week you may remove the splint for three hours in the morning and three hours in the evening. During these periods you may use your finger in a fairly gentle fashion but should not be playing any sports or doing any household chores where you might hit the tip of the finger and cause it to quickly bend again, injuring the tendon. You may start such activities as gently washing the hand and working the fingers but not attempting to forcefully flex them down into the palm. You should plan to wear the splint at night for an additional two months. If your finger starts bending down after the period of treatment and you have difficulty extending the finger or straightening it, please contact the office. It may be necessary to provide a longer period of time in the splint in certain circumstances.