

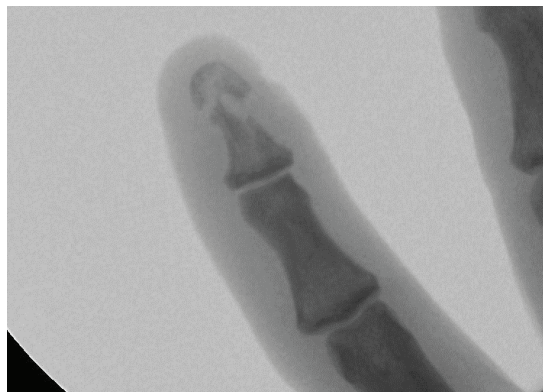
Fingertip Injuries

“Working with a knowledgeable hand therapist can make the difference between success and failure in complex hand surgical cases. The therapist extends the continuum of our care, as well as functioning as coach and trainer for our patients.”

Marybeth Ezaki, MD, Past President, American Society for Surgery of the Hand

What is a fingertip injury?

Fingertip injuries occur to the tips of the fingers or thumb. They are common injuries and range from minor cuts to major damage to bone and surrounding soft tissue. Fingertip injuries include the end joint of the finger, the finger pad and the nail. They can be a fracture (broken bone), a laceration (cut), an amputation and damage to the nail. Injuries can occur to blood vessels, nerves and tendons that lie just under the skin.



X-ray of fingertip injury

What causes a fingertip injury?

Injuries to the fingertips are common in accidents at home, work and during sports. The tips of the longer fingers tend to be injured more often because they are the last to escape from harm's way. Injuries occur when a fingertip is closed in a car door, while chopping vegetables, when removing grass from a lawnmower or when a baseball hits the tip of a finger.

What are the symptoms of a fingertip injury?

Fingertip injuries can cause bleeding, bruising and swelling. There may also be decreased feeling and a change to the shape of the finger. Some fingertip injuries may develop an infection. Due to nerve endings on the tip of the finger, these injuries may be painful and sensitive when touched.



A fingertip injury showing damage to the nail

What is the treatment for a fingertip injury?

A doctor should examine an injury to the tip of a finger or thumb. Treatment depends on the type and severity of the injury. Without proper care, a fingertip injury can result in permanent deformity and disability. Some injuries require surgery, and some require wound care and a finger orthosis to protect the healing tip.

What can a hand therapist do for me?

A hand therapist is very important in the recovery after a fingertip injury. A therapist may make a fingertip orthosis to prevent the tip from being hit while it is healing. Additional treatment includes wound care and exercises to regain motion and



improve sensation, strength and use of the finger.

Example of a fingertip orthosis made by a hand therapist

To locate a hand therapist in your area, visit the American Society of Hand Therapists at www.asht.org or call 856-380-6856.