

Finger Injury

Definition

- Injuries to fingers

Health Information

Types of Finger Injuries

- **Cuts, Scrapes (skinned knuckles) and Bruises.** These are the most common injuries.
- **Jammed Finger.** The end of a straightened finger or thumb receives a blow. Most often, this is from a ball. The energy is absorbed by the joint surface and the injury occurs there. For jammed fingers, always check that the fingertip can be fully straightened.
- **Crushed or Smashed Fingertip.** Most often, this is from a car door or a screen door. The end of the finger may get a few cuts or a blood blister. Sometimes, the nail can be damaged. Broken bones are not common with this kind of injury.
- **Fingernail Injury.** If the nailbed is cut, it needs sutures to prevent a deformed fingernail.
- **Blood Clot under the Nail.** Most often caused by a crush injury. This can be from a door crushing the finger. It can also be from a heavy object falling on the nailbed. Many are only mildly painful. Some are severely painful and throbbing. These need the pressure under the nail released. This can relieve the pain and prevent loss of the fingernail.
- **Fractures or Dislocations.**

Symptoms

- The main symptom is pain.

Prevention

- Careful adult supervision of young children
- Education of older children about high risk behaviors

Care Advice

1. **Bruised/Swollen Finger:**
 - Soak in cold water for 20 minutes.
 - To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.
2. **Small Cuts or Scratches:**
 - For any bleeding, put direct pressure on the wound. Use a gauze pad or clean cloth. Press for 10 minutes.
 - Wash the wound with soap and water for 5 minutes.
 - For any dirt in the wound, wash gently.
 - For any cuts, use an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin. No prescription is needed.
 - Cover it with a Band-Aid. Change daily.
3. **Jammed Finger:**
 - **Caution:** Be certain range of motion is normal. Your child should be able to bend and straighten each finger. If movement is limited, your doctor must check for a broken bone.
 - Soak the hand in cold water for 20 minutes.
 - To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.
 - If the pain is more than mild, "buddy-tape" it to the next finger.

4. **Smashed or Crushed Fingertip:**

- Wash the finger with soap and water for 5 minutes.
- Trim any small pieces of torn skin with a fine scissors. Clean them first with rubbing alcohol.
- For any cuts, use an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin. No prescription is needed.
- Cover it with a Band-Aid. Change daily.
- To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.

5. **Torn Nail (from catching it on something):**

- For a cracked nail without rough edges, leave it alone.
- For a large flap of nail that's almost torn through, cut it off. Use a pair of scissors that have been cleaned. Cut along the line of the tear. Reason: Pieces of nail taped in place will catch on objects.
- Soak the finger for 20 minutes in cold water for pain relief.
- Use an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin. No prescription is needed. Then cover with a Band-Aid. Change daily.
- After about 7 days, the nailbed should be covered by new skin. It should no longer hurt. A new nail will grow in over 6 to 8 weeks.

6. **Pain Medicine:**

- To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.

7. **Remove Ring:**

- Remove any ring that is on an injured finger.
- Reason: Swelling may occur.

Call Your Doctor If

- Pain becomes severe
- Pain not better after 3 days
- Finger not normal after 2 weeks
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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