

Aftercare for MCP joint replacement surgery in the knuckles of your fingers

Occupational Therapy

Information for Patients

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Introduction

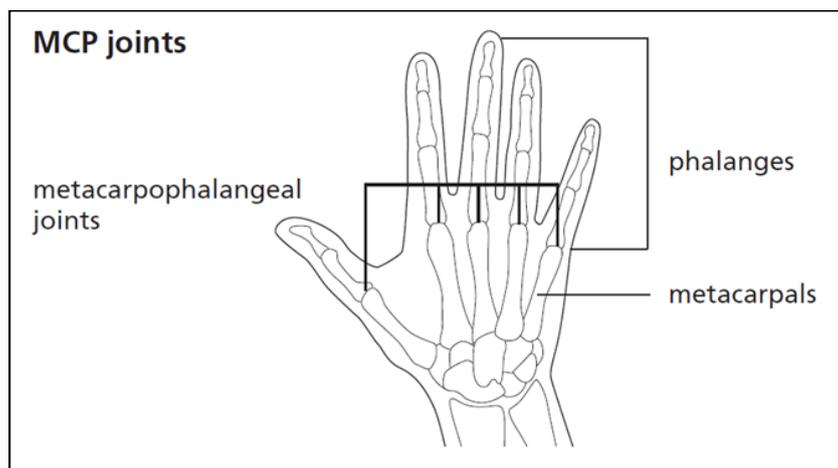
The metacarpophalangeal joints (MCP), also known as the knuckle joints, are between the bones which form the base of the hand (metacarpals) and the bones in the fingers (phalanges).

They help to position the fingers correctly and allow you to grip and pinch items. We use our hands in this way throughout the day so these joints can wear down and become painful. Some conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, or damage to a joint as a result of an injury can also cause joint changes.

MCP joint replacement surgery is most commonly performed when your knuckle joint is painful, stiff or cannot move, and non-surgical treatment has not been successful in easing problems. Surgery involves removing the old joint and replacing it with a new silicone hinged joint (see image on next page).

Joint replacement surgery (also called arthroplasty) can help reduce pain, correct deformities and help increase active movement in the fingers.

You may have had joint replacement surgery to 1 or all of your fingers.



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Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
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This diagram shows a typical soft joint replacement which is made from silicone.

(NeuFlex® MCP/PIP Finger Joint Implant System. Image supplied by DePuy Orthopaedics Inc.)



After your surgery

After surgery your hand and forearm will be in bulky dressings and a half plaster. It is important to reduce swelling in the hand to prevent stiffness developing. Please try to keep your hand raised above your elbow at all times.

You will need to attend for occupational therapy regularly for about 3 months.

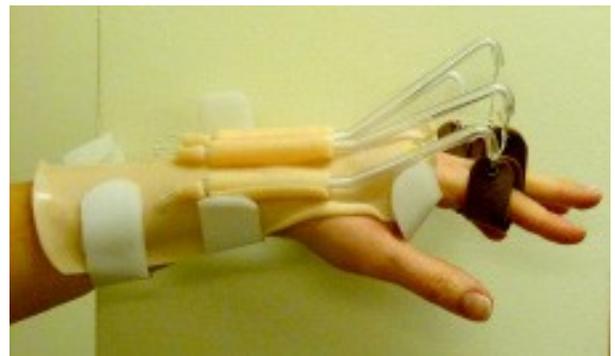
Week 1:

Within 7 to 10 days you will be asked to come to Occupational Therapy Department so that splints can be made for you. Splints are specially made for you from a plastic material and attach to your arm with velcro strapping. They are designed to protect the hand from accidental knocks and to rest the joints in a good position.

When to wear your splints

Dynamic splint:

A dynamic splint will be made for you to wear during the day time. Do not sleep in your dynamic splint as it may break if you roll on to it. Supports will sit under the fingers and elastic will hold the fingers straight. The splint will be made so that there is a slight pull on the finger to draw it towards the thumb. This is to protect the tendons and surrounding ligaments which have been disturbed during surgery.



Resting splint:

The resting splint is to be worn overnight and during the day when you feel you need a rest from the dynamic splint. You must wear one splint or the other at all times for 6 weeks. Do not try to use your hand without the protection of your splints.



Exercises

Exercises will need to be carried out every 2 hours during the day and continued at home for at least 3 months after your surgery.

Within the dynamic splint:

1. Keeping the rest of your fingers straight bend the new joints as far as comfort allows. You should see the elastic on the supports being stretched. Repeat 10 times.
2. Keeping the new joints still, bend the top 2 joints of your fingers to make a hook shape. Repeat 10 times.
3. Resting your hand on a table, keep your thumb still and 'walk' your fingers one at a time towards the thumb. Repeat 5 times.
4. Keep moving your shoulder, elbow, wrist and thumb as able.

2 weeks after your surgery

The stitches will be removed 10 to 14 days after your surgery.

As soon as the wound is dry and healed we call it a scar. Scars tighten and shrink as they age so it is very important to massage scars with cream 4 to 5 times a day for about 6 months.

Continue with any exercises as advised.

Your therapist will advise and assist you to reduce any swelling that may still be present in your fingers or hand.

6 weeks after your surgery

If your fingers are moving well and there have been no complications, you will be able to start spending time out of your dynamic splint. You may use your hand at home on light activities such as dressing, using a knife and fork, reading and tidying. Do not lift or carry heavy objects or use your hand for heavy chores.

Your therapist will advise you about returning to driving/ work/ sports and hobbies.

You will need to change the way you use your hands to prevent deformities re-appearing. It is important not to stress the new joints. You will need to avoid any force that applies to the side of the fingers.

Changing the way you use your hand



Contact details

Name of Occupational Therapist: _____

Telephone number: _____

This leaflet is intended to supplement occupational therapy treatment with patients. It is not intended for use without guidance from this team.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
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