

Aftercare following PIPJ replacement surgery on your finger

Hands Burns and Plastics Therapy

Information for Patients

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Introduction

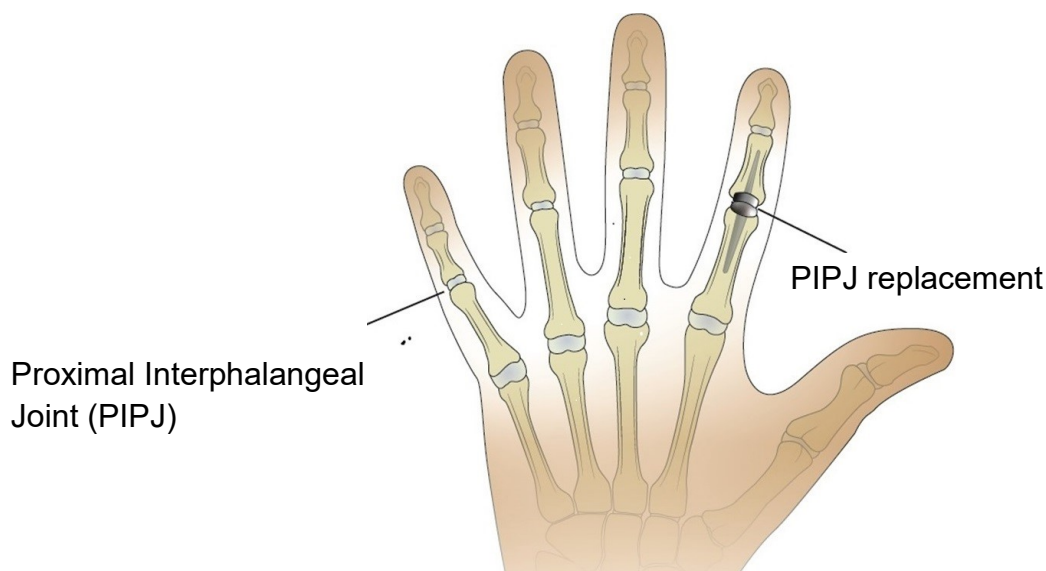
You have undergone surgery to replace the proximal interphalangeal joint (PIPJ). This is the middle joint of your finger. This is between the knuckle and the small joint near the nail.

You may need this surgery because of pain, limited movement or damage to the joint due to an injury or arthritis.



What is a PIPJ replacement?

During the surgery your joint will be replaced with an artificial joint made from Silicone.



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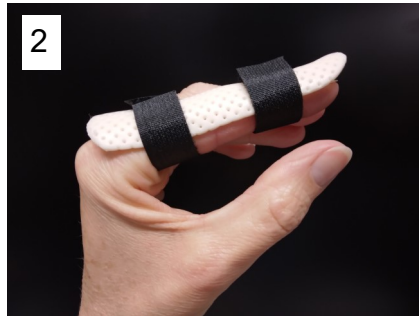
What will happen after the surgery?

- Your finger will be in a dressing or cast for the first 1 to 2 weeks. Keep your hand elevated to help reduce pain and swelling.
- You will need to come back to hospital to have the wound checked and to start therapy.
- At the first therapy appointment, we will fit a splint onto your finger. You will wear this for up to 6 weeks to protect the new joint whilst it heals.
- We will show you how to exercise the new joint safely.
- Your stitches will be removed 10 to 14 days after the surgery.
- Once the wound is fully healed, we will show you how to massage the scar to reduce problems with the scar becoming stuck and reducing movement.

How do I protect the joint and exercise safely?

You will need to wear the splint made by your therapist all of the time until you are told not to.

1. **With the splint on:** Bend and straighten the top joint.
2. **With the splint on:** Bend and straighten the big knuckle joint.
3. **Remove the top strap and with the splint on:** Bend and straighten the new joint.



Your Therapist will tell you how often and how many repetitions of each exercise to do.

Repeat each exercise _____ times.

Do each exercise _____ times a day.

How do I exercise safely?

Your therapist may decide to limit how much you are allowed to bend the new joint each week.

If this is the case you will be given an exercise splint to hold under the finger when completing exercise 3. This will be adjusted each week to allow you to bend further.



Am I allowed to use my hand?

- For the first 6 weeks you should wear the protective splint all of the time and only use the hand for very light daily tasks.
- You will normally have an X-ray 6 to 8 weeks after the surgery. This is to check that the new joint is stable and healing well.
- You will then be allowed to increase the use of the hand and slowly increase the strength and level of heavier activities that you do.
- We would advise that you do not return to driving until 8 weeks after the surgery unless told otherwise by your surgeon.

Complications after surgery:

If your wound/finger becomes hot, red or is increasingly painful and swollen then please contact your G.P as soon as possible as you could have an infection.

Sometimes after the surgery the finger can feel different or you may have “pins and needles” sensations. This can be due to swelling or because the small nerves in the finger have been damaged.

Sometimes the new joint can loosen in the bone or dislocate. The best way to avoid this is to follow the instructions given to you by your therapist.

What should I not do after surgery?

- Do not get your dressings wet.
- Do not use your hand without the protective splint on.
- Do not do heavy or resisted activities.
- Do not pinch the finger to the thumb.
- Do not drive until told it is okay to do so.

Contact details:

Name of Therapist:

Telephone Number:

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