

Aftercare following MCPJ replacement surgery to multiple fingers

Hand Therapy

Information for Patients

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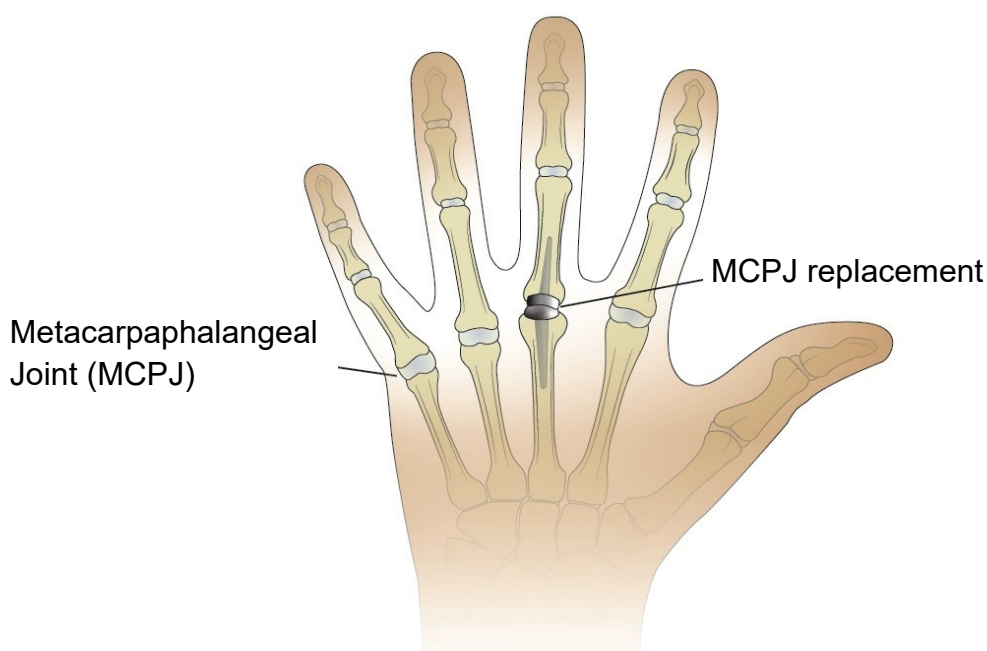
Introduction

You have had surgery to replace the Metacarpalphalangeal (MCP) joints of your fingers. These are the big knuckle joints of your fingers where the fingers join the hand.

You may have had the surgery because of pain, loss of movement, deformity or because of damage to the joint due to conditions such as Rheumatoid Arthritis or Osteoarthritis.

What is an MCPJ replacement?

During the surgery your joints have been replaced with artificial joints made from Silicone.



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What will happen after the surgery?

- Your hand will be in a dressing or cast for the first 1 to 2 weeks. Keep your hand raised 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 2 splints will be made for you to rest your hand in. **You should wear these all of the time.** Change between the 2 splints every 24 hours.
 1. One splint will keep your new knuckles as straight as possible.
 2. The other splint will keep them as bent as possible.



- You will need to wear the splints for 4 to 6 weeks to protect the new joints during healing.
- The soft tissue around the new joint will take 12 weeks to fully heal.
- Stitches will be removed around 10 to 14 days after the surgery.
- Once the wound is healed we will show you how to massage the scar to reduce problems with the scar becoming stuck and limiting movement.

Am I allowed to use my hand?

- **Do not use** the hand for the first 4 weeks after the surgery.
- You will be allowed to use the hand for light daily activities at 4 to 6 weeks after the surgery.
- An X-ray will be taken 6 to 8 weeks after the surgery to check that the new joint is stable and healing well.
- You can increase the strength and level of daily activities that you do after 6 weeks as guided by your therapist.
- We advise that you do not return to driving until 8 weeks after the surgery unless told otherwise by your surgeon.

How do I protect the joints and exercise safely?

- You need to wear a splint all of the time for the first 4 to 6 weeks.
- You can remove it to do the exercises below.
- Your Therapist will tell you how often and how many repetitions of the exercise to do.

Exercise 1:

Support your forearm on a table. Start with fingers straight then bend at the new knuckle and straighten again.



Exercise 2:

With fingers straight bend the top two joints into a “Hook” then straighten again.



Exercise 3:

Start with fingers straight. Make a fist then straighten again.

**Exercise 4:**

With palm resting on the table walk the fingers towards to thumb one at a time

**Exercise 5:**

With the arm resting on the table and the fingers relaxed, move the wrist backwards and forwards.





Complications after surgery:

- **Change in feeling:** You might feel “pins and needles” in your fingers or hand. This can be because of swelling or damage to the small nerves in your finger.
- **Dislocation:** Very rarely the new joint can become loose in the bone or dislocate. The best way to avoid this is to follow the instructions given by your therapist.
- **Infection:** If your wound / hand becomes:
 - hot,
 - red,
 - increasingly painful,
 - swollen,

This could be a sign of infection. Please contact your G.P as soon as possible.

Contact details:

Name of Therapist:

Phone number:

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