

Hand Contusion

You have a contusion. This is also called a bruise. There is swelling and some bleeding under the skin, but no broken bones. This injury generally takes a few days to a few weeks to heal. During that time, the bruise will typically change in color from reddish, to purple-blue, to greenish-yellow, then to yellow-brown.

Home care

- Elevate the hand to reduce pain and swelling. As much as possible, sit or lie down with the hand raised about the level of your heart. This is especially important during the first 48 hours.
- Ice the hand to help reduce pain and swelling. Wrap a cold source (ice pack or ice cubes in a plastic bag) in a thin towel. Apply to the bruised area for 20 minutes every 1 to 2 hours the first day. Continue this 3 to 4 times a day until the pain and swelling goes away.
- Unless another medication was prescribed, you can take acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen to control pain. (If you have chronic liver or kidney disease or ever had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding, talk with your doctor before using these medicines.)

Follow up

Follow up with your health care provider or our staff as advised. Call if you are not improving within 1 to 2 weeks.

When to seek medical advice

Call your health care provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Increased pain or swelling
- Arm becomes cold, blue, numb or tingly
- Signs of infection: Warmth, drainage, or increased redness or pain around the bruise
- Inability to move the injured hand
- Frequent bruising for unknown reasons

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Crush Injury of the Hand, No Fracture

You have a crush injury of your hand. This causes local pain, swelling, and sometimes bruising. You don't have any broken bones. This injury may take from a few days to a few weeks to heal.

If a fingernail has been severely injured, it may fall off in 1 to 2 weeks. A new one will usually start to grow back within a month.

Home care

Follow these guidelines when caring for yourself at home:

- Keep your hand elevated to reduce pain and swelling. When sitting or lying down keep your arm raised above the level of your heart. You can do this by placing your arm on a pillow that rests on your chest or on a pillow at your side. This is most important during the first 2 days (48 hours) after the injury.
- Put an ice pack on the injured area. Do this for 20 minutes every 1 to 2 hours the first day for pain relief. You can make an ice pack by wrapping a plastic bag of ice cubes in a thin towel. Continue to use the ice pack 3 to 4 times a day until the pain and swelling go away.
- You may use acetaminophen or ibuprofen to control pain, unless another pain medicine was prescribed. If you have chronic liver or kidney disease, talk with your health care provider before using these medicines. Also talk with your provider if you've had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding.
- If you have a splint or cast, keep it dry at all times. Bathe with your splint or cast well out of the water. Protect it with a large plastic bag, rubber-banded at the top end. If a fiberglass cast or splint gets wet, you can dry it with a hair dryer.
- Don't put creams or objects under the cast if you have itching.
- Don't stick a needle into the wound to drain it.
- Bruised skin may change colors over time. It may change from reddish to bluish to yellowish before the skin goes back to normal coloring.

Follow-up care

Follow up with your health care provider, or as advised, if you don't start to get better within the next 3 days.

If X-rays were taken, a radiologist will look at them. You will be told of any new findings that may affect your care.

When to seek medical advice

Call your health care provider right away if any of these occur:

- The cast cracks
- The plaster cast or splint becomes wet or soft
- The fiberglass cast or splint stays wet for more than 24 hours
- Tightness or pain under the cast or splint gets worse
- Fingers become swollen, cold, blue, numb, or tingly
- Redness, warmth, swelling, drainage from the wound, or foul odor from a cast or splint
- You can't move your fingers
- Fever of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher, or as directed by your health care provider

Dislocation: Thumb [Reduced]

A dislocated thumb occurs when the ligaments that hold the joint together are torn. This allows the bones to move apart and become stuck out of place. This causes pain, swelling, and bruising. Sometimes there is also a small "chip" fracture. If the injury is severe, and the joint is not stable, surgery may be required to keep the joint in place while it heals.



Once the joint is aligned again, it will take about six weeks for the ligaments to heal. During this time, the thumb should be protected from re-injury. This may be done with a cast or splint.

Finger splints prevent motion at the joint and should not be left in place longer than three weeks to avoid stiffness and loss of joint function.

Hand exercises may be prescribed at your follow-up visit to speed healing and maintain function. Most thumb dislocations regain full function. But, it may take 12-18 months before all discomfort and swelling go away and full function returns.

Home Care:

- 1) Keep your arm elevated to reduce pain and swelling. When sitting or lying down elevate your arm above the level of your heart. You can do this by placing your arm on a pillow that rests on your chest or on a pillow at your side. This is most important during the first 48 hours after injury.
- 2) Apply an ice pack (ice cubes in a plastic bag, wrapped in a towel) over the injured area for 20 minutes every 1-2 hours the first day. Continue with ice packs 3-4 times a day for the next two days, then as needed for the relief of pain and swelling.
- 3) Keep the splint/cast dry at all times. Bathe with your splint/cast out of the water, protected with a rubber glove or large plastic bag, rubber-banded at the top end. If a fiberglass cast/splint gets wet, you can dry it with a hair-dryer.
- 4) You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) to control pain, unless another pain medicine was prescribed. [NOTE : If you have chronic liver or kidney disease or ever had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding, talk with your doctor before using these medicines.]
- 5) No sports or P.E. until cleared by your doctor.

Follow Up

with your doctor within the next 2-3 weeks, or as advised. It is important that you see the referral doctor to determine how long to leave any splint or cast in place and when to begin hand exercises.

[NOTE: Any X-rays taken will be reviewed by a radiologist. You will be notified of any new findings that may affect your care.]

Get Prompt Medical Attention

if any of the following occur:

- Pain or swelling increases
- Redness, warmth or drainage of the injured finger
- Finger becomes cold, blue, numb or tingly

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