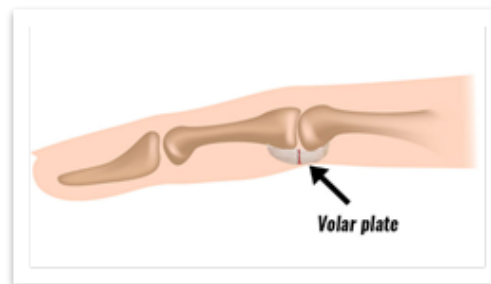


Volar Plate Injury

A patient's guide



What is volar plate avulsion injury?

- The volar plate is a thick ligament (muscle) in the finger which is attached to a small bone.
- This bone stops your joint bending backwards.
- Most volar plate injuries happen when the finger is suddenly bent backwards (for example, when catching a ball) and they should heal well with no long-term problems.
- More severe injuries, when the joint has been displaced or dislocated, may also lead to injuries of the collateral ligaments (at the sides of the joints).
- The ligaments will heal but there may be some thickening or enlargement of the joint from scar tissue.
- The more severe injuries should be assessed by a Doctor or Hand Therapist who will suggest the best way to manage the injury. You may be provided with a splint to help your healing in the early stages of the injury and be sent to hand therapy for ongoing management of your injury.

What are the signs and symptoms of volar plate injury?

- Swelling or deformity around the joint
- Pain when the finger is resting and/or with movement of the joint
- Inability to move the joint fully

What is the treatment?

- Treatment usually involves 'buddy strapping' the injured finger to another finger (taping the fingers together) to provide support whilst the injury is healing.



- This injury does not usually need surgery, but a referral may be made to the Hand Therapists if the injury is severe, or you need assistance with the recovery.
- You must change the buddy tapes regularly to prevent your skin becoming sore.
- More information and a video on changing the buddy strapping tape can be found on the Whittington Health website under the Virtual Fracture Clinic service:
<https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/default.asp?c=41987>

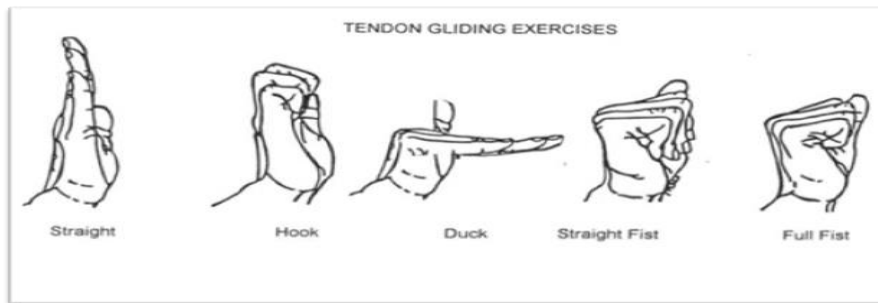
How long will it take to heal?

- Most volar plate injuries heal without any problems in about six weeks.
- You should regain movement quickly with regular exercise (within four weeks).
- It may take several months for your symptoms to settle completely. These can include pain or discomfort, stiffness, decreased strength, and swelling. The joint can be enlarged for several months.

Is there anything I can do to help?

- Keep your fingers moving within the buddy tape as this is the best way to reduce swelling and improve your range of motion.
- After two weeks of buddy strapping, you can remove the tape and start to use your hand for light activity.
- By doing the following exercises, you can improve the range of movement in your fingers.





Ongoing management after two weeks

Two to Four weeks:

- Keep your fingers moving to prevent stiffness.
- You can use your hand for light use (eating, dressing, writing).
- You can move the fingers and exercise to regain full range of movement.
- You can buddy tape your fingers for comfort or during heavier activities for support if needed.
- Try exercises in warm water to help ease any pain.
- Massaging the finger with aqueous cream (a special moisturiser you can buy without prescription) can ease swelling and discomfort.

Four to Six weeks:

- You can exercise the fingers with very mild resistance and increase it gradually as pain allows (for example: squeezing a light sponge, pair of socks, soft therapy putty or playdoh).
- You should avoid heavy lifting, gripping or contact sports until six weeks when the finger is feeling better.

Six to Twelve weeks:

- The injury has healed. You can gradually return to normal activities.
- You may still feel some pain with repetitive or strong force movements, or in the cold.



Return to Work or Driving:

- You can return to work when you feel able to manage the physical tasks of your job.
- You can return to driving when you feel confident in safely controlling your vehicle and can safely perform an emergency stop.
- Do not drive if you have a cast, splint, or straps on your hand.
- If you have pain which is continuous and not improving, you are unable to use your hand or you have any concerns about your injury, please contact the virtual fracture clinic and they can arrange an appointment with the Hand Therapy Department.

Tel.: 0207 288 3310 (8:30 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday)

Email: whh-tr.fracturevirtualclinic@nhs.net

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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