

## Education

### Finger Sprain

What is a finger sprain?

A sprain is an injury to a joint that causes a stretch or tear in a ligament. Ligaments are strong bands of tissue that connect one bone to another.

How does it occur?

A sprain usually occurs when there is an accident. For example, a ball may hit the tip of your finger or you may fall forcefully onto your finger.

What are the symptoms?

You have pain, swelling, and tenderness in your finger.

How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will examine your finger. You may have an x-ray to be sure you have not broken any bones in your finger.

How is it treated?

Treatment may include:

- applying ice packs to your finger for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away
- elevating your hand on a pillow while you are lying down or on the back of a chair or couch while you are sitting (to help reduce swelling)
- taking an anti-inflammatory or other pain medicine prescribed by your health care provider
- doing exercises to strengthen your finger during the healing process.

Your health care provider will recommend that your sprained finger be splinted or "buddy taped" (taped to the finger next to it) for 1 to 4 weeks after your injury.

How long will the effects last?

Your finger may remain swollen with decreased flexibility and strength for many weeks. Sometimes the joint swelling may take weeks or months to go away, and in some cases may be permanent. It is important to continue doing finger exercises during and even after you return to your normal activities. These exercises help strengthen your finger and improve range of motion.

When can I return to my normal activities?

Everyone recovers from an injury at a different rate. Return to your activities will be determined by how soon your finger recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury has occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better. The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your normal activities as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury.

In many cases, you will be able to return to your activities as long as you are wearing your splint or have your finger taped.

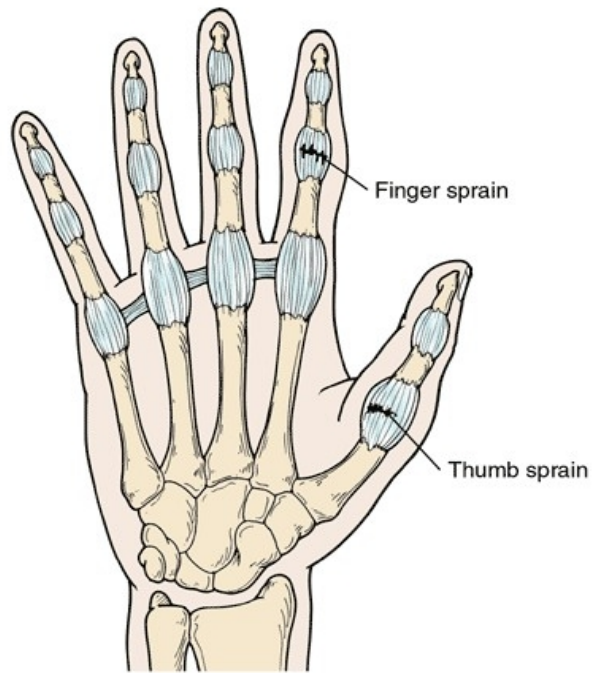
How I prevent a finger sprain?

Finger sprains are usually the result of injuries that are not preventable.

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## Finger and Thumb Sprain



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