



## WHAT IS A METACARPAL FRACTURE ?

Metacarpal fractures are breaks in the long bones of the hand known as the metacarpals. These bones connect the fingers to the wrist.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF METACARPAL FRACTURE

A metacarpal fracture should be suspected if there is pain, swelling and bruising in the palm and over the back of the hand. The ability to move the fingers, does not indicate absence of a fracture. In some cases the knuckle of the fractured finger may appear to have disappeared or there may be a 'lump' on the back of the hand indicating that the fracture has angled.

## HOW IS A METACARPAL FRACTURE TREATED?

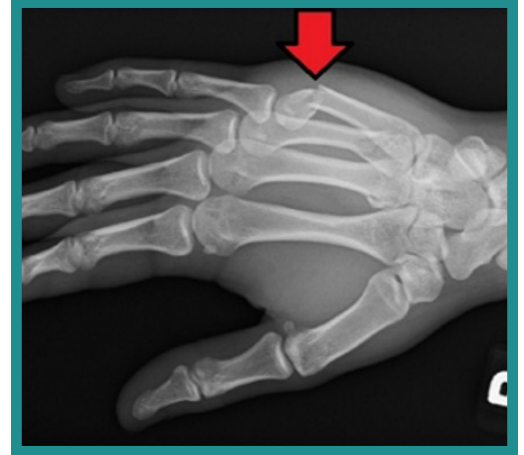
Treatment of a metacarpal fracture will depend on the location and severity of the fracture. An x-ray is always required to determine the exact nature of the fracture. Common Treatment approaches include:

**IMMOBILISATION:** In less severe cases, a splint or cast may be used to immobilize the hand and promote healing. For fractures of the metacarpal neck or shaft, it is generally not necessary to include the wrist in the splint or cast. Our hand therapists can fit you with a custom-made splint to protect your fracture, whilst leaving the wrist free.

**CLOSED REDUCTION:** In cases where there is significant angulation or shortening of the fracture, the bones may need to be realigned under local anaesthetic, followed by immobilisation in a splint or cast.

**SURGICAL REDUCTION:** For more complex fractures, surgery may be required to realign the bones and fix them with pins, screws or plates.

Regardless of which treatment method is used a hand therapist will help you to reduce pain and swelling and guide you through exercises to restore movement and strength.



Boxer's fracture / metacarpal neck fracture



Custom-made thermoplastic splint for metacarpal fracture