



## Upper Limb Unit: Hand Therapy

# Proximal Interphalangeal PIP Joint Replacement (Post – operative)

You have recently undergone surgery to replace the middle joint(s) of your finger(s). During surgery the damaged joint is removed and replaced with a silicone implant or ‘spacer’.

During the first few weeks after surgery new tissue begins to grow around the artificial joint to form a joint capsule. It is important to keep the joint moving during this time to ensure maximum movement is gained after surgery. Splints must also be worn to keep the joints in a safe position and protect the tendons.

### Wound care

Your wounds will be reviewed and redressed each time you attend the hand therapy unit. Stitches will be removed between 10 and 14 days after surgery, depending how quickly the wounds heal. If you have any concerns about your wounds between therapy appointments please contact your GP.

After stitches have been removed and the wounds are fully healed you should massage your scars daily with a non-perfumed moisturising cream such as E45 or Aqueous, your therapist will show you how to remove your splint to do this. This will help to soften the scars and prevent any adhesions between the scar tissue and surrounding structures, which may limit movement.

### Splints

You will be provided with a splint to be worn **all the time** for the **first five – six weeks** after surgery. This protects the soft tissues as they heal.

### Exercise

It is essential that exercises are completed regularly at home to regain maximum movement of the joints after surgery. The following exercises should be completed little and often throughout the day, as advised by your therapist. Exercising in the incorrect way with the splint removed risks damage to the joints and soft tissues.

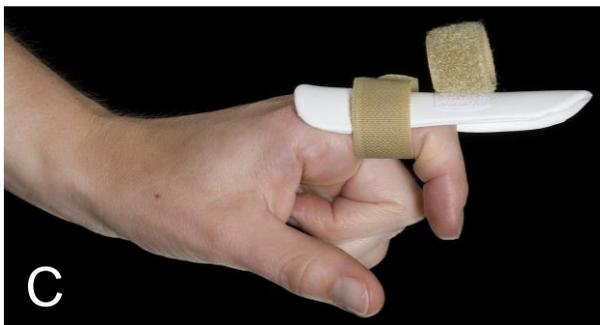


## Patient Information

- A. With your splint on:** Bend and straighten from the top joint.
- B. With your splint on:** Bend and straighten from the knuckle joint.
- C. Remove the top Velcro strap:** Bend and straighten the new joint.

Exercise your other fingers, thumb and wrist to restore and to keep full range of motion.

**It is important** that you **do not attempt** to bend all three joints of the fingers at once, for example, you should not make a full fist for the first five weeks after surgery.



### Function

You should only use the hand in very light daily tasks for the first six weeks after surgery. You may then gradually increase use of the hand under guidance of your therapist for up to 12 weeks. By this time, sufficient healing will have occurred and it will be safe to use the hand in any task.

Your therapist will offer any further appropriate advice to help you return to maximum function after your surgery.

If you need further information please contact your Therapy Department:

**University Hospital, Coventry and Warwickshire: Tel 024 7696 6016**

**Rugby, St Cross Hospital: Tel 01788 663257** For further information please visit our hand service web site <http://tinyurl.com/uhcwhand>

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6016 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

# Patient Information

## Document History

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