

**Patient  
Information**

# Thumb spica (strapping)

## Introduction

This leaflet provides you with information on how to care for your injured thumb and strapping. The strapping (tape) is known as a thumb spica and is applied to support your thumb for 5 to 7 days while it recovers.

## Care of the splint

The thumb spica must be worn for up to 1 week, or as advised. During this time, the hand, in particular the tape must be kept dry and clean. If the tape gets wet it may become too tight as it dries out. After 5 to 7 days the tape will lose its adhesive properties and will be easy to remove when soaked in warm water.

## Care of your thumb

As with any new injury you can expect some pain, swelling and bruising.

- If your thumb becomes swollen, discoloured, cold, numb or develops a feeling of 'pins and needles', please remove the strapping immediately and refer to the contact information at the end of this leaflet
- To help healing and to reduce swelling, the hand should be kept elevated. You may find a high arm sling helps you with this (see leaflet GHPI0941 Using a sling). Alternatively, you can rest your hand on a raised pillow. The hand must be raised as advised
- The thumb will appear stiff and may still be swollen. This will improve over the following 3 to 4 weeks
- Occasionally a fracture may be missed on your X-ray, however all X-rays are reviewed by a radiologist and we will inform you if you need any additional treatment. Your GP has access to any X-ray reports and can advise you further.

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**Emergency**

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## Exercises

- Regularly touch your thumb to each finger in turn
- Continue with usual daily activities and remember it is important to exercise the joints elsewhere in the affected arm, for example shoulder, elbow, wrist and hand

## Pain relief

It is important that you take regular pain relief medication to relieve any discomfort. Generally, patients find paracetamol works well and 48 hours after the injury you can also introduce ibuprofen. Please check with a pharmacist if you take any other medication.

## Contact information

You can refer yourself to a physiotherapist for advice.

Website: [www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/physiotherapy/how-can-i-see-physiotherapist/](http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/physiotherapy/how-can-i-see-physiotherapist/)

### Trauma Service enquiries

Tel: 0300 422 5269

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 2:00pm

Website: [ghn-tr.glostrauma@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.glostrauma@nhs.net)

### NHS 111

Tel: 111

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