

Collateral Ligament Injury of the fingers (Finger Dislocation/Sprain)



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What is the collateral ligament?

Your finger joints are held in place by strong, inelastic bands called ligaments. There is a ligament on each side of your finger and thumb joints. These ligaments are important for joint stability and movement.

Injury to the collateral ligaments

When the collateral ligaments are damaged, the finger may swell, especially around the middle (PIP) joint. The injured side of the joint may feel painful and tender and it may hang slightly to the opposite side. Ligament damage is often associated with dislocations or volar plate avulsion fractures about the joint surface. Ligament injuries may or may not need surgery to anchor the ligament back onto the bone.

However, therapy is important in each case to help with the control of swelling and pain, and with the return of movement. It is important to remember that ligament healing is a slow process. .

Therapy

You may be given a splint initially to help the finger to rest and heal. The splint also prevents your finger from getting stiff in a skew or bent position. This happens as a result of the swelling or when your finger is too painful to straighten properly. Splinting occurs for between 2-4 weeks. Pain and oedema management will be addressed immediately. If surgery has occurred then scar management occurs as soon as your stitches have been removed. Gentle active movement of the finger is then initiated. At a later stage stretching and strengthening of the finger can be done.