



**Vasu Pai** MD orth, MS, National Board [orth],MCh, FRACS, FICMR

### What is a hand fracture?

A hand fracture occurs when one of the small bones of the hand is broken. There are several small bones that together make up the supporting framework of the hand.

Common fractures: Scaphoid, fracture phalanges, metacarpal fracture

Treatment is non-operative or operative

Overtreatment causes stiffness

### How does a hand fracture occur?

History of injury

Pain

Swelling

A palpable deformity

Difficulty moving the fingers

### What tests are needed to diagnose a hand fracture?

1. History of injury
2. Dominant hand or not
3. Consideration of age and occupation
4. Open or close fracture
5. Doctor will obtain x-ray : Stable or unstable fracture
6. Clinically any rotation of the finger
7. Any associated tendon injury

### What treatments are used for hand fractures?

Possible treatments of hand fractures include:

#### 1. Cast & Splints

If the fracture is not displaced (meaning it is in proper position) a cast or splint will likely be sufficient for treatment of the fracture.

#### 2. Pins

Small metal pins may be inserted through this skin in order to hold the bones in a better position. The metal pins remain in place for 3-4 weeks while the fracture heals, and then the pins can usually be removed in the office. Pin track infection can be a problem and may need to be treated by antibiotics and removal of pin



## 2. Metal Plates & Screws



In some unusual types of hand fractures further treatment may be necessary.

Metal screws with either a plate or an external fixator can be used to help maintain proper alignment of the bones.

### **What problems may I encounter if I sustain a hand fracture?**

1. Most hand fractures will heal uneventfully.
2. The two most common problems patients who sustain a hand fracture will face are stiffness of the fingers and noticeable bump. The bump is usually a result of extra bone the body forms as part of the healing process. While the bump does diminish in size over time it may never completely go away
3. Deformity with rotation of the finger causing overlapping of the finger on making a fist
4. Failure to heal: More common in smokers

