Orthopaedic Connection

Finger Injuries and Infections

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

You are working in the kitchen slicing something with a knife or maybe cutting something in your shop with a power saw. One minute you are fine, the next your hand is bloody and you cut off the end of a finger or fingers.

It is one of the most common injuries that happen.

The cut may involve only the pad of the finger or may extend through the nail and even into the bone.

The Injury

The cut is usually (not always) in the non-dominant hand, the one you are positioning the object with. Finger tips can be cut off completely or still be partially attached.

There usually is considerable bleeding. Wrap your finger(s) in clean cloth bandages to stop the bleeding while you seek emergency treatment.

Best Treatment

Certainly some wounds can be managed in the emergency room. If bone is exposed or there is tendon involvement etc., these need to be treated in surgery for the best result possible. Often these injures are treated way too casually in the ER.

The hand needs to be thoroughly cleaned, repaired and closed, and perhaps a tendon or nerve repaired also. To do this properly can only be done in surgery. Patients can be sent home the same day on antibiotics and then seen in the office in a few days.

Crush Injuries

Sometimes finger tips can be crushed rather than amputated or lacerated. Crushing injuries damage the skin and soft tissue, break the bone of the tip, damage the nail and nail bed – in short really mangle the end of the finger even to the first joint.

X-rays are always needed as part of a good evaluation. Most of these should be taken to surgery to give the person the best chance for a good result.

Infections

Infections are usually located in the pad of the finger where your fingerprint is or around the edge of the nail.

Pad infections come from puncture wounds or cuts. They are serious and can destroy the nearby bone. Edge of the nail infections can occur after a manicure, from a hangnail or ingrown nail.

Pain, at times is severe; swelling and redness indicate trouble. These infections are nasty and can involve tendons and the nearby joint in addition to the previously mentioned bone infection.

Treatment of Infection
In the earliest stages a fingertip can be treated with antibiotics. But both types of infection, at times, must be drained to remove pus. Occasionally the nail has to be removed (but it grows back in months).

We have been talking about a very small part of the anatomy, but neglected infection and injuries can cause the loss of the end of your finger. I have had to amputate the end of fingers many times and in most cases it is preventable with prompt, proper care. Will it be you next? It doesn’t have to be.

*My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.*

Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive

Wow! Your window to the Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal world opens at [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com). It contains 1) The Website Library of Information 2) Your Orthopaedic Connection 3) GCH Archive of all previous articles.

You will be amazed at all the helpful information it contains.

All of the information pertains to everything I treat in the office and hospital.

Be well. Good health, good life, all the best to you.

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