# HAND HEMATOMA

### ■■■ Description

A hand hematoma is a collection of pooled blood in a small space on the back of the palm or hand. It is usually due to a direct blow. Contusions cause bleeding from ruptured small capillaries that allow blood to infiltrate muscles, tendons, or other soft tissues. The back of the hand is relatively exposed, with little soft tissue covering it.

### ■■■ Common Signs and Symptoms
- Swelling over the injury site
- Pain and tenderness over the area of contusion
- Fluctuance (fluidlike feeling, often firm) of the bump or area of swelling
- Redness that progresses through several color changes before it completely heals: from redness to black and blue or purple, then green-yellow, then yellow

### ■■■ Causes

Direct blow to the hand, usually from a blunt object such as another player, the player's equipment (helmet), or the playing surface (hockey sideboard or artificial turf); bleeding into the tissue causes the surrounding tissue to be pushed away

### ■■■ Risk Increases With
- Contact or collision sports, especially football and hockey
- Inadequate protection of exposed areas during contact or collision sports
- Bleeding disorder or use of anticoagulants, aspirin, or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications

### ■■■ Preventive Measures
- Wear appropriate protective equipment and ensure correct fit (such as hand pads for contact sports).
- Limit the use of anticoagulants, aspirin, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications.
- Wear tape, pads, a splint, or a cast to prevent re-injury if play is resumed before healing is complete.

### ■■■ Expected Outcome

This condition is curable with appropriate treatment in 2 to 8 weeks. Healing is quicker if treated by withdrawing the blood with a needle.

### ■■■ Possible Complications
- Excessive bleeding, leading to prolonged disability
- Infection (uncommon)
- Hand stiffness
- Delayed healing or resolution of symptoms, particularly if activity is resumed too soon
- Recurrence
- Calcification of the blood remaining in the hematoma if blood has not been completely removed or absorbed

### ■■■ General Treatment Considerations

Initial treatment consists of medication, ice, and compressive strapping to relieve pain and reduce swelling. Heat, massage, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines, and vigorous physical therapy are usually delayed for at least 48 hours. Referral to a physical therapist or athletic trainer may be advised for further evaluation and treatment. Occasionally, needle aspiration of the hematoma is performed to hasten the healing. For return to play, pad the hand to reduce the likelihood of re-injury. Do not massage the hand while it is healing; it may trigger bleeding again.

### ■■■ Medication
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as aspirin and ibuprofen (do not take for the first 3 days after injury or within 7 days before surgery), or other minor pain relievers, such as acetaminophen, are often recommended. Take these as directed by your physician. Contact your physician immediately if any bleeding, stomach upset, or signs of an allergic reaction occur.
- Topical ointments may be of benefit.
- Pain relievers may be prescribed as necessary by your physician. Use only as directed and only as much as you need.
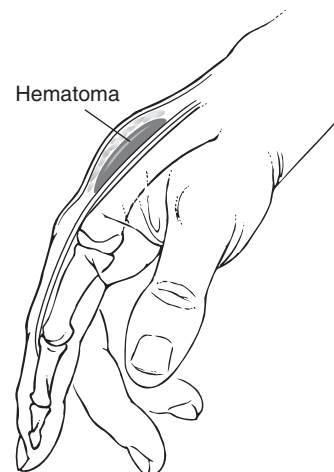


Hematoma

**Figure 1**

## ■ ■ ■ Heat and Cold

- Cold is used to relieve pain and reduce inflammation. Cold should be applied for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours for inflammation and pain and immediately after any activity that aggravates your symptoms. Use ice packs or an ice massage.
- Heat may be used before performing stretching and strengthening activities prescribed by your physician, physical therapist, or athletic trainer. Use a heat pack or a warm soak.

## ■ ■ ■ Notify Our Office If

- Symptoms get worse or do not improve in 2 weeks despite treatment
- The skin is broken and you have signs of infection (drainage, increasing pain, fever)
- New, unexplained symptoms develop (drugs used in treatment may produce side effects)

Notes: (Up to 4400 characters only)

Notes and suggestions