

JERSEY FINGER

(Flexor Digitorum Profundus Rupture)



■ ■ ■ Description

Jersey finger is characterized by an inability to bend a fingertip under its own power. This is due to an injury to the tendon that bends the last joint in the finger. A flexor tendon is the attachment of the muscle to a bone that bends a joint. This injury is usually to the tendon that bends the last joint of the finger. This results in an inability to bend the finger under its own power, although it can be bent using the other hand (passively). The injury may be a rupture of the tendon, the tendon may be pulled off the bone, or occasionally bone may be pulled off with the tendon (avulsion fracture). This injury most often occurs in the ring finger and usually results from grasping or grabbing another player's jersey or pants.

■ ■ ■ Common Signs and Symptoms

- A pop or rip felt in the finger at the time of injury
- Pain with moving the injured finger
- Finger that is straight at the last joint and unable to bend it under its own power
- Full passive motion of the finger (can be bent)
- Tenderness, swelling, and warmth of the injured finger
- Bruising after 48 hours
- Occasionally a lump felt in the palm of the hand

■ ■ ■ Causes

Jersey finger is usually due to forced straightening of a bent finger, leading to a rupture of the flexor tendon to the last joint of the finger. This causes the tendon to be pulled off the bone, although occasionally some bone is pulled off with the tendon. This usually happens as a player tries to grasp an opposing player's jersey. Uncommonly it may occur due to a laceration (cut).

■ ■ ■ Risk Increases With

- Sports that involve grasping, such as rugby, football (during tackling), and ice hockey when gloves are removed and a player grabs another's jersey
- Poor physical conditioning (strength and flexibility)
- Previous or untreated jersey finger

■ ■ ■ Preventive Measures

- Appropriately warm up and stretch before practice or competition.
- Maintain appropriate conditioning:
 - Hand and finger flexibility
 - Muscle strength and endurance
- Taping, splinting, or protective strapping may be recommended before practice or competition.
- Use proper tackling technique.

■ ■ ■ Expected Outcome

This condition usually requires surgical repair. Return to sports is usually not recommended for at least 3 months after surgery.

■ ■ ■ Possible Complications

- Permanent deformity (inability to bend finger)
- Stiffness of finger
- If untreated, unstable last joint
- Poor finger function
- Rerupture of the tendon
- Pain or weakness with gripping
- Prolonged disability
- Arthritis of the finger, especially if associated with a fracture
- Risks of surgery, including infection, injury to nerves (numbness, weakness), bleeding, weakness, recurrent tendon injury, and finger stiffness

■ ■ ■ General Treatment Considerations

These injuries almost always require surgery. Initial treatment usually consists of splinting the finger, icing, and elevating the injured finger to eye level to reduce swelling. Medications may be given for pain. These injuries usually require surgery to reattach the tendon to bone or to reattach the bone that may have pulled off with the tendon. The timing of surgery is based on how far the tendon has pulled away from the bone. After surgery the hand is immobilized to protect the tendon while it heals. After immobilization, stretching and strengthening of the injured and weakened joint and surrounding muscles and tendon

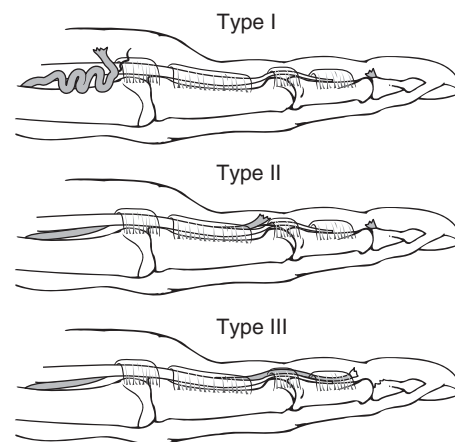


Figure 1

(due to immobilization and injury) are necessary. These may be done with or without the assistance of an occupational therapist, physical therapist, or athletic trainer.

■ ■ ■ Medication

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as aspirin and ibuprofen (do not take 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.
- Pain relievers may be prescribed as necessary by your physician. Use only as directed and only as much as you need.

■ ■ ■ Notify Our Office If

- Pain increases despite treatment
- Any of the following occur after surgery:
 - You experience pain, numbness, or coldness in the finger
 - Blue, gray, or dusky color appears in the fingernails
 - You develop signs of infection, including fever, increased pain, swelling, redness, drainage, or bleeding in the surgical area
- New, unexplained symptoms develop (drugs used in treatment may produce side effects)

Notes:

(Up to 4400 characters only)

Notes and suggestions