

# EPiC clinic

## Information for patients



### Introduction

You have been referred to the **E**nhanced **P**athway for hand **I**njuries that are **C**losed and **C**omplex (EPiC) clinic. This is because you need specialist assessment to find out the best treatment option for your injury

You may need specialist assessment for any of the following:

- when the bones break into more than two pieces (comminuted fracture)
- when the pieces of bones are no longer aligned together (displaced or angulated fractures)
- when the bone fragments are more likely to change position (typically spiral or oblique pattern of fractures)
- possible tendon injuries
- ligament injuries which may affect joint stability

You will be assessed by an experienced physiotherapist or occupational therapist. They will have specialised knowledge and skills to assess and treat hand fractures.

Based on your assessment, and in conversation with you, the EPiC therapist will determine whether non-surgical or surgical treatment is the best option for you.

### New care pathway

This is a change from the Trust's usual care pathway, where people with complex hand fractures were seen by hand surgeons.

The aim of the EPiC clinic is to:

- reduce waiting time for treatment
- start rehabilitation earlier
- improve your outcome by involving you, early on, in care decisions

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We know from research that this method of care is safe and leads to earlier return to functional activities.

## What happens during the appointment?

1. The EPiC Therapist will ask questions about the injury, your health and your day-to-day activities.
2. They may remove your cast or bandage to examine your hand.
3. If necessary, an X-ray may be performed in the clinic.
4. If more tests are needed to further understand your injury, these will be ordered. You will be given another appointment for them to be done.

## Treatment options

The therapist will discuss treatment options and explain which type of treatment is most effective to treat your injury.

If required, the therapist will give you with a splint or support to protect your injury or stop it from moving. You will be told when to wear this, and for how long.

You may be given exercises and a fit note (statement of fitness for work), if required.

From this appointment, one of the following will happen:

- you may be discharged with self-management advice
- you may be referred to hand therapy if you need rehabilitation to help you regain your hand function. You should receive an appointment in the next 14 days
- you may be given another EPiC Clinic appointment to check the position of your healing fracture or to reassess your progress
- it may be decided that surgery is your best treatment option. If surgery is required, this will usually occur within 3 days

## What if I need a surgery?

We consider many factors when deciding the best treatment option for your injury.

As it takes longer to recover from, surgery is usually recommended when it offers the best chance to recover hand function.

If the EPiC therapist has concerns about treatment planning for your hand injury, they will discuss this with a hand surgeon on the day.

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If surgical care is the best treatment option for you, the risks and benefits of each option will be discussed. If you agree with surgical intervention, you will be scheduled for theatre within the next **3 days**.

On the day of the surgery, you will meet your surgeon and will be able to ask further questions and address concerns you may have.

## What if I am not comfortable with a therapist assessing my hand? Or if I want another opinion regarding the best treatment?

You can always ask to be scheduled into a hand surgery consultant-led clinic. Please call us on the number below or discuss your concerns with the virtual fracture clinic nurse.

## Who can I contact for more information?

**Waiting to hear from us? Call:** 020 3312 5552 (virtual clinic and appointment enquiries)

**Email:** [imperial.virtualfractureclinic@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.virtualfractureclinic@nhs.net)

## Where can I find more information?

Visit our website pages:

- virtual fracture clinic: [Virtual fracture clinic | Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
- hand therapy: [Hand therapy | Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
- hand clinic: [Hand and wrist clinic | Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust](#)

**This pilot clinic is funded by the Imperial Health Charity**

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## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**). The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

There are several ways you can contact the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust PALS team

- complete a PALS form on our **website**: [Patient advice and liaison service \(PALS\) and complaints team at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust | Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
- **call** 020 3312 7777. Opening times are 10.00 to 16.00, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)
- **email** [imperial.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.PALS@nhs.net) – please provide as many details as possible, including which of our five London hospitals your request applies to
- **write us a letter:**  
PALS Manager  
Ground floor, Clarence Building  
St Mary's Hospital  
Praed Street  
London  
W2 1NY

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department  
Fourth floor  
Salton House  
St Mary's Hospital  
Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)