

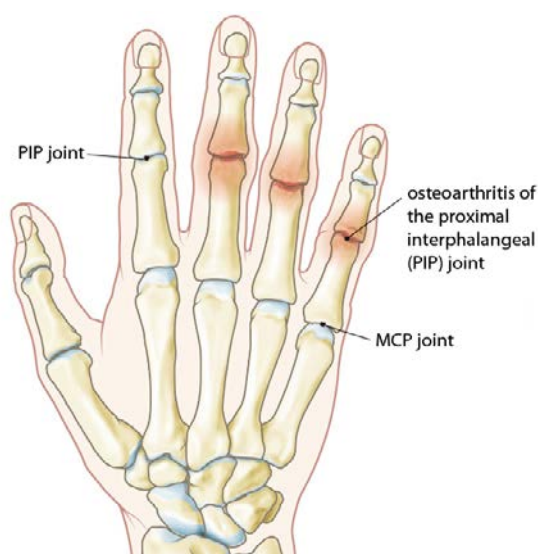
GRIP

Hand, Wrist &
Reconstructive
Surgery

Joint Replacement Surgery

Small joint damage

Arthritis or trauma can cause irreversible damage to the joints of the fingers. This can result in ongoing pain, stiffness and swelling. Loss of function is most noticeable if it involves the PIP or MCP joints of the fingers. In advanced cases, replacement of the involved joint or joints with an implant can be the treatment option of choice.



Your operation

Your PIP or MCP joint will be replaced with an implant. Depending your situation, the implant material will be a combination of metal and Teflon, pyrocarbon or silicone. The operation usually takes place as a day surgery procedure, using general anaesthesia and a local anaesthetic for postoperative pain relief. The operation usually takes about 45 minutes per finger.

An incision is made on the back of the affected joint. The damaged joint surfaces will be removed to allow placement of the implant. Overlying tendons will be rebalanced to gain the optimal postoperative range of motion. The wound will be closed using sutures.

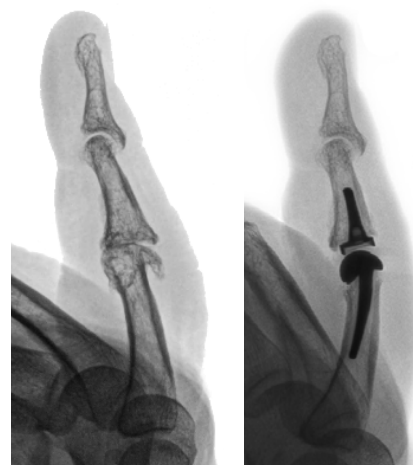
A tape bandage (Hypafix) will cover the wound under a soft hand dressing with or without a temporary plaster cast.

After the operation

Day of surgery: some or all of your fingers may feel numb or tingly for 6-36 hours due to the local anaesthetic. You can start to move the fingers not included in the dressings for light duties before you leave the hospital.

Day 1-7 after surgery: keep the dressing clean and dry. You will be referred to a hand therapist who will replace the dressings and plaster with a plastic, removable splint custom made to your hand.

Day 7-14 after surgery: the splint can be removed for gentle hand and finger exercises, but should be worn at all other times. The tape bandage on your hand can get wet when cleaning your hand gently.



Two weeks after surgery: your progress will be reviewed by the doctor and practice nurse. Sutures will be removed at this visit. If needed, a new tape bandage will be placed for another 3-5 days. With guidance of the hand therapist, you can increase the amount of movement when exercising your finger over the next 2 weeks.

Four to six weeks after surgery: your progress will be monitored by the doctor and hand therapist. At 4 weeks, the splint will be replaced with tape or straps connecting the operated finger to an adjacent finger (buddy taping). This will assist in increasing movement of your finger more.

Six weeks after surgery: All splinting or taping can be stopped at this stage. You can increase use of your hand and fingers for graded return to normal duties. Follow up appointments will continue to take place as required to monitor your progress.

Recovery

In most cases, the wound heals in 2 weeks and exercises can be increased gradually and comfortably. In some cases, however, the finger can remain tender or swollen for 4 to 12 weeks after surgery. The hand therapist and surgeon will continue to assist you with your recovery.

Potential complications

Finger joint replacement surgery is routine and safe. Complications are uncommon. These complications can include: wound healing problems, infection, bleeding, bruising, nerve injury, tendon injury, ongoing tenderness, swelling, stiffness or slower than expected recovery. Most of these complications only cause temporary problems. The implant may fail at the long term or the replaced joint may become stiff again. If this happens, further surgery may be required.

Driving after surgery

General advice on driving after surgery:

- » there is no legislation that covers surgery and driving
- » you must be able to safely control your car well, even in an emergency situation
- » some insurers will not cover any damage or liability if you had "recent surgery", if you were wearing a splint or cast whilst driving, or were using (pain) medication that could affect your ability to drive
- » it is advisable to contact your insurer before you are planning to drive again after your surgery
- » check with your surgeon if driving may affect the outcome of your rehabilitation.



CONTACT

If you have any questions or have concerns after your surgery, please contact our rooms during office hours on **08 7127 0365**.

After hours, please contact Dr. Paul van Minnen by phone call or text message:

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Disclaimer: All information provided on this handout should be considered as general guidelines. Actual practice and (expected) outcomes may differ in your case.