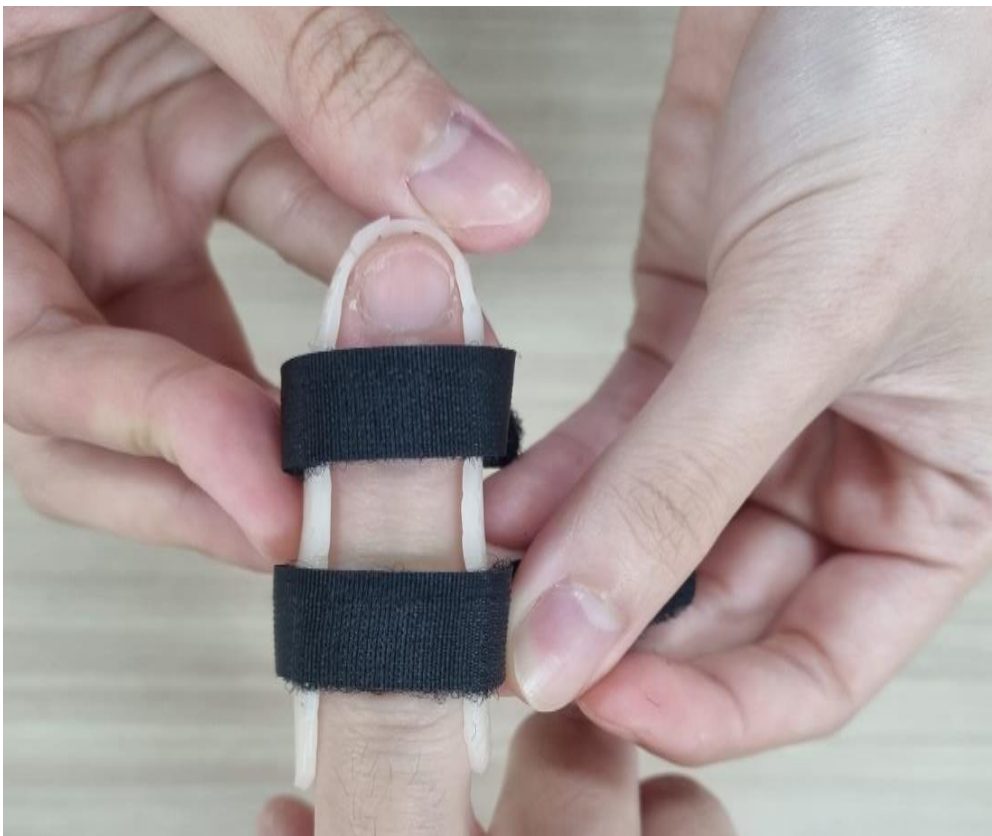


Department of General Medicine (Rheumatology)
Department of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy Services (Orthosis) for Rheumatological Conditions



What are some common rheumatological conditions and their symptoms?

Some individuals with the common rheumatology conditions below experience stiffness and pain in their hand joints, which result in difficulty performing house chores, work tasks and basic everyday activities like brushing teeth and buttoning.

- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Psoriatic arthritis

How can an orthosis help you?

An orthosis (or splint) is moulded to fit a specific part of your hand and hold it in place. Orthoses help to:

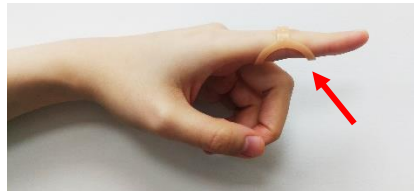
- Position the hand more comfortably at rest to reduce painful symptoms, allowing for restful sleep.
- Provide joint stability and safety for healing.
- Position the joint for better functional use of the hand in daily tasks such as gripping and pinching.
- Position the affected joint to slow down further deformity.



Common types of orthoses



Resting hand splint



Oval 8 splint



Thumb push brace



Thumb CMCJ soft brace



Finger trough splint

Where can I obtain orthoses?

While some orthoses (e.g. wrist braces) may be available for purchase in retail shops, we strongly recommend that you consult your occupational therapist on the most appropriate type of orthosis for your condition.

You will require a doctor's referral for occupational therapy services. Occupational therapists are trained to rehabilitate people experiencing difficulties in performing their activities of daily living. They can prescribe a suitable orthosis and exercise regime for you to manage your symptoms better. They will also teach you ways to modify your daily activities so you can do them more easily.

How often do I need to wear them?

If symptoms are severe, you will need to wear the orthosis at all times. As symptoms like pain and inflammation gradually subside, the orthosis can be worn when using the hand for activities, or at times when symptoms flare up.

How do I care for them?

If your orthosis is made of a thermoplastic material (where high temperatures can cause it to change shape), keep it away from heat sources. Thermoplastic orthoses can be washed with room-temperature water and soap. Avoid hot water.

For most orthoses, check the washing instructions that come in the packaging.

How do I make an appointment with the occupational therapist?

During your clinic visit, your doctor will assess the need for you to be seen by an occupational therapist. Of note, there are also many non-rheumatological conditions that will benefit from an occupational therapist's intervention. You may discuss your condition with your doctor for further information. Thereafter, an appointment will be arranged for you to see the occupational therapist.

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