FINGER DISLOCATION

♦ What is it?

Finger dislocation is an injury to any finger joint so that adjoining bones are displaced from their normal position and no longer touch each other. Fractures often accompany finger dislocations, but ligament sprains must occur for these injuries to occur. Finger dislocations commonly occur in athletes.

♦ Signs and Symptoms of this Condition

- Severe pain at the time of injury and when attempting to move the injured finger.
- Loss of function of the dislocated joint.
- Tenderness, obvious deformity, swelling, and bruising at the injury site.

♦ Causes

- Direct or indirect blow, twisting injury, or landing on the hand, finger, or thumb.
- Result of a severe finger sprain or fracture.

♦ What Can I do to Prevent a Dislocated Finger?

- Appropriately warm up and stretch before practice or competition.
- Maintain appropriate conditioning, especially hand strength and flexibility.
- To prevent recurrences, protect vulnerable joints after healing with protective devices or buddy taping the injured finger to an adjacent finger.

♦ Prognosis

- With appropriate reduction (repositioning of the joint), the hand or finger may require immobilization for 2 to 3 weeks. Complete healing of ligaments requires 6 weeks.

♦ Treatment

- Immediate reduction (repositioning of the bones of the joint) by trained medical personnel.
- Acutely: Ice, splinting or taping, elevation, and anti-inflammatory medication (aspirin, ibuprofen, etc.) Surgery may occasionally be necessary to restore the joint to its normal position if a tendon, bone chip, or other structure prevents repositioning.
- Splinting, taping, bracing, or casting may be required for anywhere from 2 to 6 weeks while the ligaments heal.
- Ice for 15-20 minutes several times per day for 48-72 hours.

➢ Once released by your physician to do so, you may begin range of motion exercises to restore joint motion. It is very common that patients experiencing a dislocated finger do not regain full motion of the injured joint, although functional range of motion can be restored.