

## **Employers In Iowa Rely On the Iowa Ortho Hand Division**

The hand is one of the most anatomically complex parts of the human body. The wrist, hand, and fingers are necessary to assist us in almost everything we do throughout the day, from delicate movements to write, text, and email, to forceful maneuvers operating heavy equipment. Working properly, our hands enable us to execute simple and complex tasks that allow us to perform most of our activities of daily living. If there were no hand injuries, this article could stop here, but that's definitely not the case. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, of the 3.6 million work-related injuries treated annually in hospital emergency rooms, hands and fingers are the most commonly treated. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that occupational related hand and finger injuries rank second highest in the amount of time lost from work with back strain and sprain being the first. Yet, the most significant factor is that more than 90 percent of all acute injuries in the workplace are caused by human error, not equipment failure. So what does all this mean besides an onslaught of acute hand injuries and increasing costs?

"There are numerous occupations that pose potential injuries to workers. Hazards can come from welding, chemicals, sharp metal edges or objects, pinch points at operating machines, extreme heat and cold, repetitive movements. The list is really endless. But, the light at the end of the tunnel is that when everyone works together, occupational injuries can be reduced," says Scott Shumway, M.D., who developed the Iowa Ortho Hand Division. "Through job analysis, proper employee training, utilizing suitable equipment, and implementing appropriate safety standards (e.g. machine guards, lockout/tag out procedures, gloves), employers and risk management teams take the necessary first step in reducing injuries. While injuries can be reduced, the combination of running machinery..and hands, will always equal traumatic injuries. That's where the Iowa Ortho Hand Division, steps up to the plate," adds Dr. Shumway.

Jennifer Long, R.N., Occupational Health Nurse at John Deere in Ottumwa agrees. "When I contact the Iowa Ortho Hand Division I can count on them to get the patient seen quickly. Recently, we had an employee who was injured during the night. I called the Iowa Ortho Hand Division at 8:00 a.m. the next morning. I was probably their first call of the day. The clinic hand schedule was full, but the patient was added in and seen that same day. That's what we need, exceptional physicians who provide outstanding medical care and are willing to go above and beyond when needed. They go above and beyond not just when needed, but consistently," states Jennifer.

"It's important for traumatic hand and finger injuries to be treated as quickly as possible. Not only does this provide optimum opportunity for a successful outcome, but careful evaluation at the time of the injury is critical to determine the extent of the injury," states Iowa Ortho Hand Division Orthopaedic Surgeon, Michael Gainer, M.D. "Probably the most frequent types of traumatic hand injuries are due to lacerations, traumatic amputation, avulsion fractures, crush injuries, burns, or injection injuries. It's important to know how the patient was injured to determine the full extent of the injury. For example, if a patient sustains an injury by getting their hand caught in a roller, it's important to know what size and type of object normally passes through the rollers, if there was an automatic release mechanism, and once the hand was

caught how quickly the rollers were able to be stopped and the hand released. This can pose multiple injuries, potential burn depending on how the hand was released from the rollers, lacerations, fractures of the hand and fingers, injury and damage to soft tissues, nerves, and the nail beds. When injuries are treated at the onset, they can often resolve without complications arising later,” concludes Dr. Gainer.

Twenty-nine year veteran case manager, Marilyn Street, R.N., says Dr. Gainer provides a comprehensive examination and gives concise answers to get the treatment expedited. “Knowing the extent of the patient’s injuries is essential to providing prompt care. When we can get that information and relay it to the employer and adjuster, everyone, including the injured worker, knows what the treatment plan is. Utilizing the Iowa Ortho Hand Division, the outcomes for hand injuries are successful and I believe that’s one of the reasons, there are no surprises,” says Marilyn. Like Jennifer, Marilyn recalls when she had an acute hand injury and Dr. Gainer worked the patient in his schedule. “I couldn’t be more satisfied with the care received by injured workers I’ve referred there, and neither can the injured workers. They too are pleased with the care and that’s why we’re all here, to help the injured worker,” states Marilyn.

The Iowa Ortho Hand Division treats all wrist, hand, and finger injuries including, acute and traumatic hand injuries, cumulative trauma injuries, amputations, nerve, tendon, and soft tissue injuries, fractures, tendonitis, arthritis, and injuries requiring surgical reconstruction. “Iowa Ortho Hand Division sees the big picture. They are not only concerned about the work comp injury, but how the patient will return to home life and activities. The Hand Division wants our injured workers to be successful and so do we. It’s a win-win for our injured workers,” concludes Jennifer. Iowa Ortho Hand Division...we see the big picture and we’re only a phone call away.