

## **Script – Print – Don't let your avocado have the upper hand**

Avocados are easily one of the trendiest foods out there these days. They're healthy, they're filling and they can be used in many ways – whether it's as a topping on a sandwich, mixed with a salad or the perfect complement to your favorite chip.

But hand injuries are more common than you might think when cutting into fruit such as avocado, watermelon or grapefruit. Nearly 9,000 people visit an emergency room each year with hand injuries that result from poor cutting techniques, that have been dubbed "avocado hand."

"It's estimated about one in four people over the course of their lifetime, will end up in the emergency room as a result of hand injury," says Dan Magdziarz, DO, an emergency department physician who treats patients at OSF HealthCare. "Avocado injuries are just one of the gamut of hand injuries, but they're fairly common in the summer, as people like to enjoy this tasty fruit."

Avocado hand can lead to injuries such as minor cuts and nerve and tendon damage. "Most commonly we see lacerations, superficial skin avulsions, but you can get other more serious injuries, like tendon injuries, nerve muscles and superficial blood vessels," says Dr. Magdziarz.

### **Best way to avoid injury**

The issue with avocados is as they ripen, the flesh becomes softer. Injuries happen when you misjudge how hard or soft the inside of the avocado is when it's time to cut into it.

That's why you should never cut an avocado while holding it in your hand. Instead, Dr. Magdziarz says place it on a cutting board.

"Take a knife and cut slowly when you cut into the avocado, and when you hit that seed with your knife, stop," he says. "Put the knife down, pick up the avocado, then twist the avocado with your hand and then pull it apart," he says. "It's relatively easy to do."

"Next, take your thumb and middle finger and use your index finger behind that avocado, and then just pop the seed out. When the seed comes out, you're ready to work. Take a spoon and then just scrape out that inside goodness. And now your avocado is ready to enjoy."

There are also special tools available online which make it easier to remove the hard pit from the center of the avocado.

### **If the injury is severe, seek help**

If you do slice your hand, the first thing to do is to apply pressure to the wound. You can also clean the wound with cool running water. "Use a clean paper towel or gauze and just apply direct pressure directly over your bleeding wound for 20 minutes," says Dr. Magdziarz. If the bleeding persists, have someone drive you to the nearest emergency department, or if the injury is severe, call 9-1-1.

Depending on the extent of the injury, recovery can take weeks to months. A hand injury without any damage to the nerves or tendon typically only requires stitches. Nerve damage that could cause loss of function or sensation in the hand may lead to surgery and hand therapy. For more information on avocado hand, visit the OSF HealthCare [website](#).