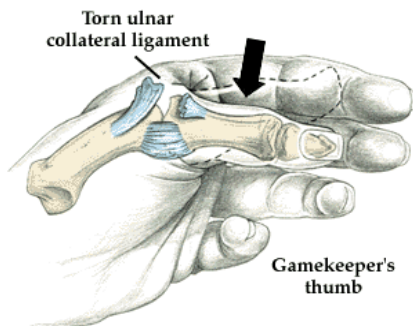




Skier's & Gamekeeper's Thumb

What are Skier's and Gamekeeper's thumb?

Skier's thumb is an acute injury that occurs to the ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) of the thumb when the ligament that stabilizes the medial aspect becomes torn or avulsed from its insertion point at the proximal phalanx of the thumb resulting in instability of that joint. The ulnar collateral ligament is located on the aspect of the thumb close to the index finger. *Gamekeeper's thumb* is similar to Skier's thumb but more of a chronic, recurrent injury.



What causes Skier's thumb?

Skier's thumb can be caused from acute trauma such as a fall on an outstretched hand or acute impart to the thumb itself causing a valgus force resulting in a rupture or tear of the ulnar collateral ligament.

Signs and symptoms?

Signs and symptoms of Skier's thumb include instability of the MCP joint of the thumb with associated pain and weakness. Swelling may also be present around the thenar eminence and MCP joint.

How is Skier's thumb treated?

Skier's thumb is typically treated with immobilization in a thumb spica splint (often 4-8 weeks) to allow the ligament to heal. Patients may also benefit from treatment by a Physical Therapist or Occupational therapist. Occasionally, with severe tears, surgery may be required.

Splint 4-8 wks (depending on severity):

- 2-4 weeks: strict immobilization in thumb spica splint
- 2-4 weeks: wean out of splint w/ daily activities but still splint during sports or high-risk activities

When do you need surgery?

Surgery is typically reserved for severe tears, complete ruptures of the ligament, persistent pain/instability, and when a Stener's lesion is present.