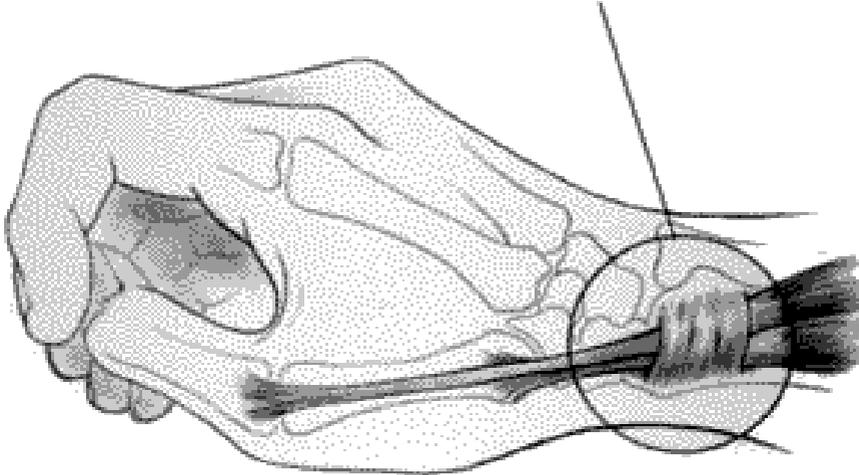


Advice after having

De Quervain's Surgery

Area of irritation or
swelling in tendon sheath



What is De Quervain's Syndrome?

De Quervain's is a problem which gives pain in the thumb and wrist. This is caused by irritation of the tendons in this area.

It causes pain on movement, especially turning a key, wringing out clothes or any movement which puts strain on the thumb. Occasionally a painful swelling in the area is seen or felt.

Very occasionally people can need surgery for this problem.

This leaflet will give you some advice on what to expect and what to do after you have surgery.

About the Surgery

The surgery is usually a day procedure which means you can usually go home on the same day as your surgery. Depending on the procedure it may be performed under local anaesthetic in which you will remain awake or under general anaesthetic in which you will be asleep.

The doctor will make a cut on the skin on the side of your wrist near the base of your thumb. The surgery opens the tissue over the swollen part of the tendon. This allows the tendon to move more freely without as much pain.

Please note that with any surgery there are potential risks involved. The majority of people have a straight forward recovery following surgery. However complications can occur and include:

- Infection - If your wound is leaking, red or you have a temperature or are feeling unwell this may mean you have an infection. Please contact the hand clinic immediately (if out of hours please contact NHS 24 – Telephone 111).
- Nerve injury causing altered sensation or loss of feeling in the thumb area.
- Persistent scar tenderness.
- Injury to the arteries of the fingers or hand.
- Failure to resolve the pain.

Please contact the clinic on the number at the end of this leaflet if you have any concerns

What to expect after surgery?

You will have a padded bandage on your hand and a bulky dressing. You can remove the bulky dressing after 48 hours but do not remove the padded bandage. Your stitches will be removed 10 - 14 days after surgery.

Your wrist and thumb may be sore and swollen at first.

It is important to manage your pain to allow you to move and do your exercises. Please speak to your GP or pharmacists about controlling your pain if necessary.

You may feel numbness or tingling near the cut that the doctor made. This feeling will probably start to get better in a few days, but it may take several months to go away.

How to care for your hand

Remember to keep your dressing clean and do not soak your hand in water until your stitches have been removed and the wound is well healed. You may shower, but keep the bandage dry by covering it with a plastic bag (bin bag or carrier bag).

Once your wound is completely closed and the stitches have been removed, begin massaging your scar and the surrounding area with moisturiser. Any non perfumed moisturiser is suitable.

The massage will help soften your scar, make it less sensitive and help with healing.

We may recommend that you wear a splint on your hand for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery, and you should gradually decrease the time you have this on.

Exercise

You can start the hand exercises once the bulky dressing has been removed. If you have a splint please remove it when doing exercises.

Gently bend and straighten your fingers throughout the day to keep them flexible and help reduce swelling.

Gently circle your thumb in both directions and take it back and forth across your palm.

Moving and generally using your hand

You may begin to use your hand as pain allows, remember for the first couple of weeks you should avoid heavy lifting or pulling. Remember to keep your dressing clean and dry until your wound has completely healed.

In some cases, it may take 6 to 12 weeks for your pain to settle completely.

Prop up your wrist on a pillow anytime you sit or lie down for the first 2 or 3 days. Try to keep your wrist above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.

Ice

You can put an ice or a cold pack on your hand and wrist for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Try to do this every 2 hours for 3 - 5 days following your surgery or until the swelling goes down. Put a thin cloth or plastic bag between the ice pack and your skin or wound so that it remains dry.

Driving

You can return to driving when it is comfortable to do so. You must feel that you are in complete control of the car; **it is your responsibility to check with your insurance company before returning to driving.**

Most people can return to work within 1- 4 weeks, whilst heavy manual workers may need at least 6 weeks. We advise that you avoid repetitive wrist and thumb movements and thumb for at least 6 weeks.

Contact Details:

Hospital: _____

Department: _____

 Number: _____