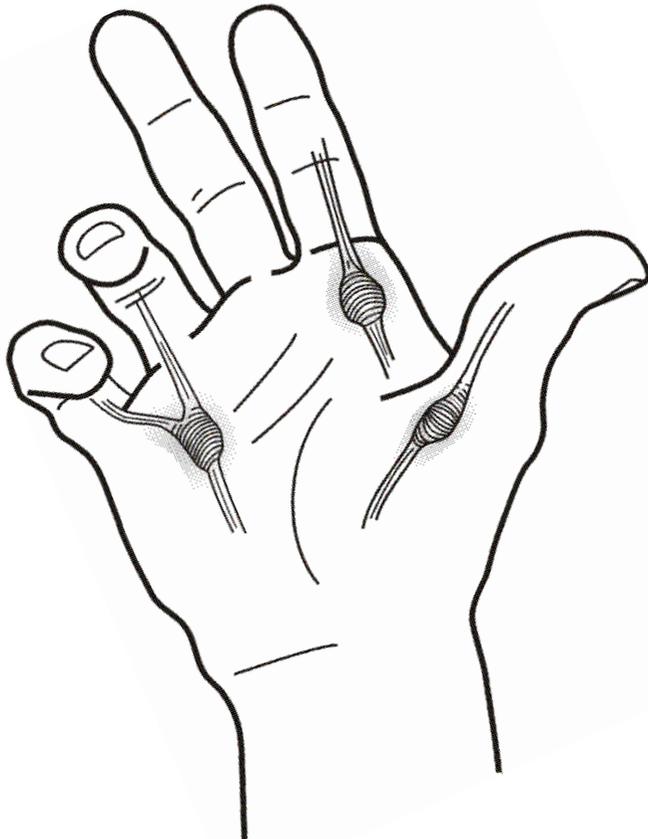


Advice after having

Dupuytren's Release Surgery



What is Dupuytren's?

Dupuytren's is a thickening and tightening of tissue beneath the skin on the palm of the hand. It can cause dimples or lumps in the skin on the palm and can cause the fingers to bend over. It is usually painless although some people can describe discomfort around the small lumps (nodules) on the palm.

It often affects the ring and small finger more than the others, although it may involve any or all of the fingers. It sometimes runs in families although there seems to be no clear reason for it to begin.

Some people need surgery to help straighten the fingers. The surgery is called a fasciectomy. **This leaflet will give you some advice after having a fasciectomy.**

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 aim of the surgery is to improve the function of your hand. The surgeon will remove the thickened tissue from a cut on your palm. This cut will either be a couple of centimetres long in the palm or the finger or a zigzag from your palm to your middle finger. The wound is closed, but some parts of it on the palm may be left open to allow for healing.

On some occasions it may be necessary to remove the overlying skin. The wound may be left open or we may replace the skin with a skin graft from your inner arm.

Please note it is not always possible to get the bent fingers completely straight.

Please note that as 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 damage causing altered sensation or loss of feeling in the surgical area.
- Persistent scar tenderness.
- Reoccurrence.
- Injury to the arteries of the fingers or hand

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

What to Expect After Surgery

You may have a padded bandage on the palm side of your hand and arm. We will remove the bandage and check the wound when you return to the clinic (about 3-7 days after your surgery). If you had a graft the dressings are removed 10-14 days after your surgery. Please do not be alarmed when the bandage is removed at the clinic if the wound looks 'open'. We will apply a lighter dressing and tell you when to start your exercise programme (see exercise section).

Occasionally we may give you a splint to wear at night. The clinic will advise when and how long to wear the splint.

We will ask you to return to the clinic 1 week later for your stitches to be removed. You will continue to have follow up visits until the wound is healed and we are happy with your progress.

You may experience pain and discomfort at first but normally this resolves with time. 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.

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. 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 to soften your scar, make it less sensitive and help with healing.

Exercises

To help increase the movement in your hand you will need to do some exercises.

You will start these exercises at your first visit to the clinic.

The exercises should be done 4-6 times per day.

While doing your exercises your dressing may become stained – this is common and should not stop you from exercising.

Exercise 1



Wrist and fingers straight

Make a fist

Repeat _____ times

Exercise 2



Support your forearm on a table with palm facing down

Bend your wrist and knuckles. Then straighten your wrist and knuckles

Repeat _____ times

Exercise 3



Palm on table

Spread fingers and bring them together

Repeat _____ times

Moving and using your hand

You may begin to use your arm 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.

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.**

Time off work

This will depend on your occupation and, or place of work. We advise that you avoid all heavy lifting for at least 6 weeks.

Contact Details:

Hospital: _____

Department: _____

 Number: _____

