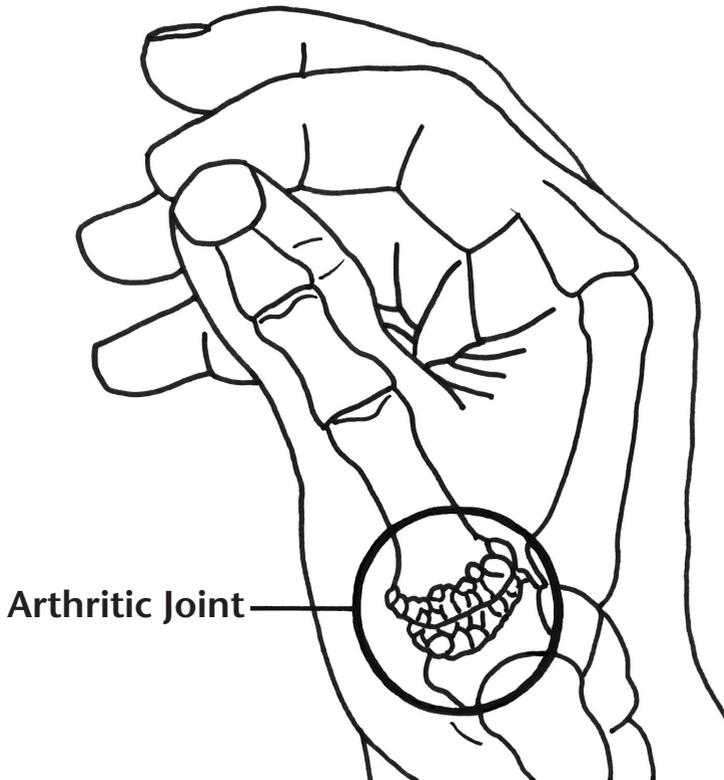


Advice after having

# A Trapeziectomy



## What is Osteoarthritis (OA) of the base of the thumb?

OA of the base of the thumb is a very common complaint. This is usually due to normal wear and tear, caused by the demands placed on the thumb during our everyday activities.

OA at the base of the thumb can cause symptoms of pain and stiffness. You may find some difficulty with gripping and tasks such as opening jars and turning a key in a lock.

Symptoms can often be controlled by non surgical treatments but if they are not effective surgery may be an option. The most common surgery is called a trapeziectomy. **This leaflet will give you some advice after having a trapeziectomy.**

### After the Surgery

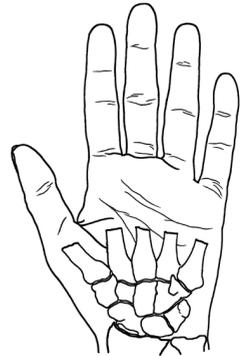
The surgery is usually a day procedure which means you can usually go home on the same day as your surgery. Depending on the procedure it may be performed under local anaesthetic in which you will remain awake or under general anaesthetic in which you will be asleep.

The surgery involves removing a small bone called the trapezium

(as shown in Figure 1) through a small cut at the base of your thumb. Removal of this bone gives more space for the thumb

to move so that the bone surfaces are not rubbing together causing pain.

Sometimes an additional small cut is made on the front of your forearm in order to get a piece of tendon to use to stabilise the base of the thumb after we remove the small bone.



**Figure 1**

**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 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**

Your thumb and hand will be put in a splint or a cast. Your surgeon will advise on when the cast or splint will be removed or changed. If a wire has been inserted, this will be easily removed after 3 - 4 weeks.

During the time your splint or cast is on it is important to:

- Keep your hand raised to help get rid of swelling
- Move your fingers to prevent them from becoming stiff

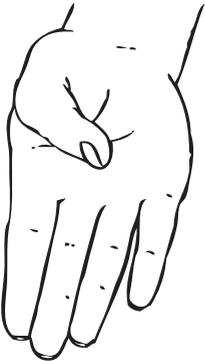
You may experience pain and discomfort at first but normally this resolves with time. Please speak to your GP or pharmacists about controlling your pain if necessary.

## Moving and using your hand after your splint or cast has been removed.

After the splint or cast has been removed, you can now start to move your thumb and we will ask you to do some exercises. The exercises are described below. You should try to use your hand as normally as possible. How much you do with your hand at this stage depends on how much pain you are in. It is important to manage your pain to allow you to move the thumb and do your exercises.

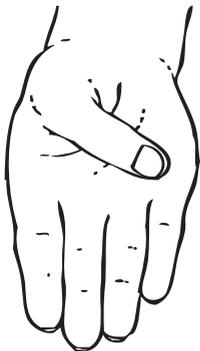
### Exercises

#### Exercise 1



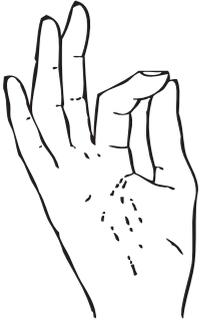
Hold all fingers straight.  
Make a big circle with your thumb.  
Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

#### Exercise 2



Put the back of your hand on a table.  
Bring your thumb to the base of your little  
finger. Bring your thumb back.  
Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

### Exercise 3

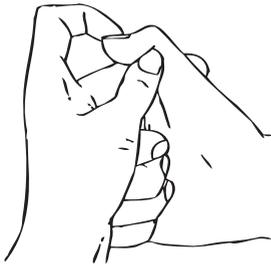


a) Elbow or back of your hand on a table.  
Put your thumb against each fingertip in turn.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

b) Practise picking up small objects.

### Exercise 4



Bend the upper joint of your thumb.  
Assist the movement with your other hand.

Hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Driving

You can return to driving when your cast has been removed and 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.

**Please remember recovery of full function can take a long time, in some cases it can be 6 months or more before you carry out any heavy functional tasks.**

## Contact Details:

Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

 Number: \_\_\_\_\_



