

Advice after having

Surgery for a Trigger Finger or Thumb



What is Trigger finger or thumb?

Trigger finger is a condition in which a finger or thumb can click, catch and, or lock as it is bent towards the palm. It is often worse on waking. It is an irritating condition that can interfere with the function of the hand, but it is not harmful.

The triggering or locking is due to inflammation or swelling of the tendon or the cover of the tendon (tendon sheath), in the palm of your hand. It can occur in any of the fingers, but it is more common in the thumb, middle and ring fingers.

Surgery is an option for patients who are struggling to manage everyday activities due to the trigger pain and where injections have been unsuccessful or are not an option. This surgery is called a trigger finger or thumb release. **This leaflet will give you some advice after having a trigger finger or thumb release.**

After the Surgery

The surgery is usually a day procedure which means you can usually go home on the same day as your surgery. This surgery is usually performed under local anaesthetic in which you will remain awake. If a general anaesthetic is used you will be asleep during the surgery. The aim of surgery is to widen the tendon cover so that the tendon can slide smoothly. The surgeon makes a small cut at the base of your finger or thumb to do this.

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).
- Stiffness in your fingers or hand.
- Persistent scar tenderness.

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.

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 heals. 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.

Exercise

As soon as you can move your hand you should do the following exercises:

Exercise 1



Start with your wrist and finger straight.

Make a fist.

Repeat _____ times

Exercise 2

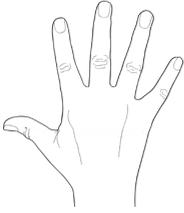


Support your forearm on a table with your palm facing down.

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

Repeat _____ times

Exercise 3



Place your palm on the table.

Spread your fingers and then bring them together.

Repeat _____ times

These exercises should not be painful, although you may experience a little discomfort initially.

Moving and using your hand

Once your dressing and your stitches are removed you can return to normal activities as long as you are moving your hand well. This normally happens very quickly.

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

Most people can return to work within 1- 4 weeks, whilst heavy manual workers may need at least 6 weeks.

Contact Details:

Hospital: _____

Department: _____

☎ Number: _____