



# Information about **Dupuytren's Disease**





## **What is Dupuytren's Disease?**

It is likely that you have a condition called Dupuytren's Disease. It often starts with firm lumps in the palm of the hand. Sometimes firm cords (thickened tissue) will develop beneath the skin and spread into the fingers. These cords (thickened tissue) may cause the fingers to bend into the palm. These cords are not thickened tendons. Although the skin may become involved in the process, the deeper structures, such as the tendon, are not directly involved.

Dupuytren's Disease is a condition where there is a gradual thickening and tightening of the deep layer of the tissue in the palm of your hand.

It usually occurs in the ring and little finger although it can occur in the other fingers and thumb.

A sign of the condition may be a lump or nodule (growth) in the palm. It may be that cords or thick bands then develop along the length of the palm and fingers. If the disease progresses the cords become thicker and tighter. This may pull the finger down towards the palm of the hand.

Before coming to hospital or attending the clinic we would like to give you some more information about Dupuytren's Disease to help you make any decisions about possible treatment you might want.

## **Can Dupuytren's Disease be cured?**

Research is still ongoing to find a cure. Currently the disease cannot be stopped. There is no tablet, medicine or physiotherapy treatment available that can help or improve the bent fingers (contracture).

## **Do I need treatment?**

You do not need treatment if you have just have nodules in the palm and no bent fingers.

If you are not having problems with your everyday tasks you do not need treatment. If your fingers become more bent and you start to have problems with function get back in touch with us so that we can re-assess you.

You may benefit from having treatment if you can't put your hand flat on a table (with the palm facing down) and it is:

- Affecting your ability to use your hand
- Making it harder for you to carry out everyday tasks
- Making your work difficult

## What treatments are available?

There are several treatments available. The treatment will depend on the severity of disease and number of fingers affected.

### **Percutaneous Needle Fasciotomy**

This procedure is performed under local anaesthetic and we use a needle to break down the cord and improve the movement of the finger. This can be done in the outpatient clinic or in an operating theatre. This will be discussed with you at your appointment.

### **Fasciectomy**

This is a surgical procedure where we remove the cord through incisions (small cuts) in the hand and fingers. Sometimes you need a skin graft. It is not always possible to get the finger fully straight.

The final decision about your treatment depends upon the severity of the condition. The different treatments work in different ways. It may be that not all the treatment options are appropriate for dealing with your problem. We will discuss this with you at your clinic appointment. Despite surgery, the disease may come back again or your finger may not end up fully straight. There is also a small risk of infection and swelling, as well as stiffness and numbness. Rarely a nerve or artery in your finger could be damaged leading to permanent numbness or problems with the circulation in your finger.

## **Where can I find further information?**

Before you can make an informed decision about your treatment we recommend further reading online on websites that contain professionally checked information on the Dupuytren's Disease:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dupuytren-contracture/>

<https://www.bssh.ac.uk/patients/conditions/25/dupuytren-disease>

<http://dupuytren-society.org.uk/>

<http://www.eatonhand.com/hw/hw009.htm>

If you make an appointment for clinic we recommend that you write down all the questions you may have to help you make the right choice for your condition. The clinician you will see will be happy to explain all the options available to you and answer your questions.

## **What do I do now?**

After reading this leaflet if you think that you do not need treatment at the moment you do not need to take any further action. You can get advice from us directly in the future if your symptoms get worse. Please contact us on the number provided on the covering letter if you wish to discuss further.



