

## What is Trigger Thumb/Finger?

A trigger finger (also known as stenosing tenosynovitis) is a condition that affects one or more of the hand's tendons, making it difficult to bend the affected finger or thumb.

If a tendon or the tunnel a tendon runs through (called the tendon sheath) becomes swollen and inflamed, the tendon gets irritated and can 'catch' in the tendon sheath.

Trigger finger or Trigger Thumb is a "snapping" of any of the fingers or thumb of the hand when opened or closed.

Instead of a smooth continual movement, the digit stutters then snaps into a fully straight or fully bent position.

The "snap" is frequently associated with pain at the base of the finger on the palm of the hand.

Trigger finger is caused by local swelling from inflammation or scarring around the tendons which normally move the digit.

Usually trigger finger occurs as a condition alone but may be associated with an underlying illness which causes inflammation of tissues of the hand, such as rheumatoid arthritis.

## What is the treatment for Trigger/Thumb Finger?

### ***Not treating is an option at first***

Around one in five cases will improve without any treatment. Simply resting the hand

Trigger finger is a condition that affects one or more of the hand

and allowing any inflammation to settle may resolve the problem without the need for treatment.

You may be advised to take some anti-inflammatory drugs (for example, ibuprofen

### ***A steroid injection***

A steroid injection into the tendon sheath is one treatment if the condition does not settle.

The steroid is combined with a local anaesthetic to make the injection less painful.

Steroids work by reducing inflammation and swelling. This treatment works in about 8 in 10 cases.

A second injection after 3 months may be needed if the first does not work.

### ***Surgery***

An operation done under local anaesthetic may be advised if the above does not work.

A small cut is usually made at the base of the finger and the tendon sheath is widened.

The operation is usually very successful. However, with an operation there is a small risk of damaging the finger nerve and causing some numbness to the finger.

Also, as with any operation, there is a small risk of any wound becoming infected.

## How soon can I drive after my procedure?

The NHS website advise you should not drive until you feel it is safe to do so, usually this will be 3- 5 days after the procedure.

You must seek advice from your GP before you do drive.

### **Post operation**

Your hand will be bandaged and you will be asked to keep the hand above the elbow as much as possible for 48 hours.

You should move the affected finger as much as possible. After 48 hours you can reduce the dressings down to the small plaster over the wound.

You can then return to most activities but nothing strenuous or manual for 10 days, until the stitches are removed at your GP practice. The scar will be tender for six weeks.

### **Who do I contact if I have any problems following my surgery?**

If you experience any problems following your operation we advise you to contact your GP Surgery in the first instance.

If you have any urgent queries regarding your post-operative recovery please call 111 or visit the nearest Urgent care center

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