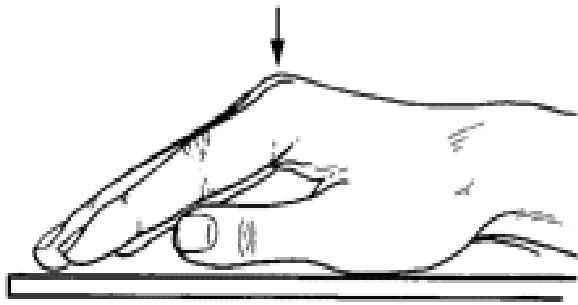


Release of Dupuytren's Contracture (trigger finger) **Information for patients**

This leaflet tells you about the condition known as Dupuytren's Contracture. It explains what is involved, and the common complications associated with this condition. It is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor, but as a guide to be used in connection to what is discussed with your doctor.

What is Dupuytren's Contracture?



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Dupuytren's disease is usually noticed when the palm cannot be placed flat on an even surface. It is caused by abnormal growth or thickening of tissue. This occurs over the tendons of the hand at the base of the fingers. The fibrous tissue which develops is like scar tissue and causes the fingers to contract downwards towards the palm of the hand and prevents them from having normal movement. The cause is unknown.

What does the operation consist of?

Your doctor will discuss the best option for you, and answer any questions you may have about the procedure. The procedure will only be carried out with your consent, and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

A cut is made in the palm of the hand and fingers from where the thickened tissue is removed, increasing the range of movement of the affected fingers. The skin will usually be closed with fine stitches (sutures) and the area bandaged. Occasionally the wound may not be stitched. Please do not be alarmed by its appearance.

What are the alternatives?

There are no suitable alternatives to this surgery.

What are the complications?

Complications are rare. Excessive bleeding under the wound is a possible complication of the operation. This rarely leads to infection, stiffness and pain, your surgeon may need to release the blood clot.

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Damage to the nerves or blood vessels can occur causing temporary pain and occasionally leave the area with a permanent numbness.

Rarely the skin at the edge of the wound may not have enough blood supply to heal. If this happens a skin graft in some cases may be needed.

What is the expected outcome of this operation?

Usually this operation gives good improvement in the range of movement. The final result depends on how badly contracted the finger was. In some severe cases full release may not be possible.

After the operation - General Advice

Ensure somebody is with you to care for you at least for 48 hours following your operation.

Do not lock your toilet or bathroom when you use it as your carer may not be able to help you if you get into any kind of difficulty. Avoid smoking, drinking alcohol and taking sleeping tablets for 48 hours after your operation.

Your General Practitioner will be faxed all the details of your operation. Please remember that the Day Procedures Unit, surgical wards or your own doctor may be contacted for further advice.

- Keep your arm supported on a pillow when sitting for the first 1-2 days
- Do not allow your hand to hang down as it may increase the swelling

Pain Control

Some pain after your operation is normal and usually worse for the two days after surgery. The pain should ease as your body heals.

Taking care of your wound

- Leave your dressing on until advised by nursing staff or discharge letter (in about one week)
- If you experience any loss of feeling, loss of movement or discoloration of your fingers contact the A & E department urgently. The telephone number is at the bottom of this leaflet.

Eating and Drinking

- If you have had a general anaesthetic it is better to avoid large meals and eat small snacks instead.
- Increase your fluid intake – 1-2 litres a day (not alcohol).
- If you have had a general anaesthetic and cannot pass urine for up to 6-8 hours after going home, contact the Accident & Emergency Unit.

Exercise

Perform these sets of exercises at least three times a day as your bandages allow. Repeat each exercise ten times.

- Lift your whole arm above your shoulder. This will prevent your shoulder from becoming stiff.

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- Rest your forearm on a firm surface (chair arm or table) palm downwards. Then without moving your elbow turn your palm upwards as far as you can (as if you are receiving money) and then turn your palm down again.
- Straighten your fingers out and bend them down at the knuckles.

Work

You will need to take some time off work, usually until you have had your stitches out which is about one week. You can self-certify for the first week, after that your doctor can supply you with a sick note. After having a general anaesthetic do not operate any kind of machinery including cookers or kettles. Avoid making any important decisions or signing any important documents for at least 48 hours after your operation.

Driving

Do not drive until you have been back to the Fracture Clinic to have your stitch out which is usually about one week.

Further Outpatient Appointments

You will only be given another appointment to come to the Outpatient Department if your Consultant considers this to be necessary.

Contact Details.

If you are going to have an operation you may be asked to attend the hospital for a pre-operative assessment. Please ask our staff any questions you may have about your treatment. Alternatively, you can phone the main hospital switchboard on 0121 424 2000 and ask to speak to your consultant's secretary.

Day Procedure Unit Telephone number:	Solihull Hospital	0121 424 4399
Day Surgery Unit Telephone number:	Heartlands Hospital	0121 424 0312

Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. If we need to share information that identifies you with other organisations we will ask for your consent. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Additional Sources of Information:

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

You may want to visit one of our Health Information Centres located in:

- Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Tel: 0121 424 2280
- Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946
- Clinic Entrance Solihull Hospital Tel: 0121 424 5616
or contact us by email: healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk.

Information for Patients

Dear Patient

We welcome your views on what you thought of this patient information leaflet, also any suggestions on how you feel we can improve through our feedback link below:

- Patient Information Feedback email:
patientinformationleafletfeedback@heartofengland.nhs.uk

If you wish to make any other comments this can be done through the links listed below:

- Patient Opinion: www.patientopinion.org.uk
- I want great care: www.iwantgreatcare.org (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about our patient information and this hospital and how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the sites.

If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or your treatment or if there is anything you do not understand and you wish to know more about please write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.

