

## Trigger Finger Information



## What is Trigger Finger?

Trigger finger is a condition where there is pain, stiffness or discomfort when moving the affected finger.

This occurs when there is inflammation and swelling of the tendon that normally glides smoothly under its narrow sheath tunnel. Hence the swelling causes friction with the sheath which clinically shows as pain, stiffness and snapping during the finger motion.

## What causes a Trigger Finger?

Trigger finger may be associated with gout, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis or even some sport activities that overload the hand. Sometimes there is no clear cause, and most cases are a result of accumulated wear and tear of over usage of the hand.

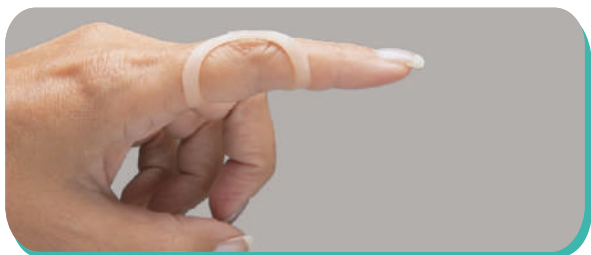
## What are the symptoms of Trigger Finger?

You may start to feel stiffness and ache at the base of the affected finger. Triggering or locking may occur with pain in the middle of the affected finger.

## How is Trigger Finger treated?

### **Conservative treatment:**

Rest from heavy use of the hand with splinting, analgesia & advice on activity modification by the occupational therapist. However, the results are unpredictable and may not be effective for everyone. To feel significant recovery with this treatment it can take up to 3 months and results vary with many factors including the stage of the inflammation.



## **Steroid injection:**

Is a reliable way to lessen the pain and discomfort. A steroid injection comprises a mixture of local anesthetic and a steroid. It is a simple procedure which can be performed in the clinic and administered in a sterile fashion. The efficacy of the injection is 60-70%.

## **Risks of a Steroid Injection:**

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Steroid flare (30%)
- Hypopigmentation (skin whitening)
- Fat atrophy
- Injury in nerves and vessels
- Recurrence (30%-40%)
- Tendon injury rupture
- Transient rise in blood sugar for diabetic patients
- Potential decreased milk production in lactating women

## **What to expect?**

The injection will be administered in the clinic. A dressing will be placed over the site of the injection, it can be removed after 3 hours. Please make sure your hands are dry before removing the dressing. Your finger will also be numb for about 3 hours after the injection. The effects of the injection are usually seen between 2-3 weeks after the injection.



### **Surgery:**

Offers a curative solution to the problem. It is indicated when the symptoms persist despite nonsurgical treatment and when recurrence occurs after steroid injection.

Surgical release of the A1 pulley is a day surgical procedure that is performed under local anesthesia. The procedure itself takes about 30 minutes.

### **Risks:**

- Allergic reaction to local anesthesia
- Infection
- Tendon injury
- Scar formation
- Finger stiffness
- Incomplete release
- Injury to nerves and vessels

### **Post-surgery recovery:**

Your wound will be dressed for about 2 weeks before the stitches are removed. After surgery you will be able to move your finger without restriction and driving is also possible. Some patients may be referred to hand therapy after surgery to improve on range of motion and joint stiffness.