

# **PATIENT INFORMATION**

## **Dupuytren's Contracture**



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Dupuytren's contracture is the thickening and shrinking of the layer of tissue just under the skin of the palm. It can cause lumps or dimples in the skin of the palm and can draw the fingers down into a bent position. It is named after the surgeon who first wrote about the condition, Baron Dupuytren in 1834. Surgery is often performed to improve the movement of the effected finger and allow for it to straighten as much as possible.

## **While in Hospital**

Surgery for a Dupuytren's contracture releases the tissues causing the fingers to bend. It is usually completed as a day case and you return home the same day however, you may stay in hospital overnight.

It is advisable to bring in loose fitting clothes to enable you to get dressed easily following surgery as you may have bulky dressings/bandages around your hand.

After surgery you will be shown gentle exercises to maintain your fingers/thumb shoulder, elbow and wrist movements. You can do these exercises within the limits of the bandages.



### **1. Seated Elbow Flexion-Extension**

Sit on a chair with your elbow extended and supported out to the edge on a table (palm facing upwards). Use a folded towel under the elbow. Keep your spine effortlessly elongated and maintain width across your collar bones.

Bend and extend your elbow using full range of motion.



## 2. AROM thumb opposition with flexion

Sit upright in a chair.

Place your affected arm on a table, holding the forearm up.

Bring the tip of your thumb to touch the tip of your index finger, creating an "O" shape.

Then slide the tip of your thumb down the front of your finger as far as it will go. Repeat this movement with each finger.



## 3. AROM thumb circumduction

Sit upright in a chair.

Place your forearm and hand on a table with your hand on its side.

Keeping your fingers and the tip of your thumb straight, move your thumb in a circular motion.

Create as big a circle as you can with your thumb and try to move it in both directions.



## 4. AROM finger flexion and extension

Place your affected arm and hand flat on a table.

Try to make a fist, curling your fingers on to your palm, then fully straightening your fingers back out.

Note that this exercise also works if you can only make the movement in your mind.

Do not lift or carry items with the operated hand until the stitches are removed.

You will be contacted by the outpatient hand therapy team with an appointment for your dressing to be reduced and night splint fabricated approximately 2 weeks after your surgery.

Appointments for the removal of stitches if required and a surgical review will be made for you by the nursing staff. If you have not received these appointment details please contact the ward on, 01695 656861

## Therapy

As an outpatient you will see a Hand Therapist to ensure the range of movement gained in surgery is maintained.

At your first appointment, usually 2 weeks after your surgery, a resting splint will be fabricated. This is a splint made from thermoplastic material that is warmed and draped across your hand. It is moulded and cut to size to ensure your fingers are held in a straight comfortable position. **You will be advised to wear this splint for at least 3 months post-surgery at night time only.**

At this first appointment you will be also given some further exercises for the hand to ensure you can bend and straighten your fingers when the bandaging is off. You will be able to start using the hand in light activity as soon as the bandages are off.

Once your wound is healed the Hand Therapist will ensure your scar remains flexible and will advise on further treatment if required.

It is normal to feel discomfort and swelling around the area of your scar after surgery. However contact your hospital or GP if:

- Your wound becomes red, swollen or hot
- Your wound smells unpleasant and oozes liquid
- You develop a temperature
- Your fingers become progressively more swollen or stiff.

Please ensure your wound and dressings remain clean and dry.

Following surgery, there is an increased risk of developing a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). Maintaining your mobility and the movements in your joints can reduce this risk.

## **Signs of a DVT**

- Pain – in the muscle belly e.g. calf/thigh or arm which increases when pressure is applied.
- Swelling – sudden increase in swelling of the soft tissue.
- Temperature – increase in temperature in the area of pain.
- Redness - of the local area.

Unfortunately a DVT can be present without these signs and similarly the presence of these signs does not always indicate a DVT.

## **What to do if you suspect a DVT**

Contact your GP or attend your local Accident & Emergency Department (Southport 01704 547471)

## **Contact Details**

Ormskirk Hospital Therapy Department

Tel: 01695 656268

8:30am – 4:30pm

Southport Hospital Therapy Department

Tel: 01704 704150

8:30am – 7:00pm

## Therapy Appointments

### Wound Re-dressing Appointment

Location .....

Date/Time.....

### Hand Therapy Appointment:

*(You will receive this directly from the hand therapy department via telephone call or letter following discharge.)*

Location .....

Date/Time .....

Therapist .....

## Orthopaedic Clinic Appointment

### Outpatient Appointment Line

Tel: 01695 656680

Location .....

Date/Time .....

**We would be grateful for any feedback on our orthopaedic service. Please go to NHS Choices website to review our service – [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**

**Notes**



**During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**

## **REHABILITATION**

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your rehabilitation, please contact the Director of Rehabilitation, on tel no 01704 547471.

## **INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST**

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

## **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Contact the hospital if you have any concerns.

## **ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:**

If your symptoms get worse, contact your GP.

DVT.

Wound infection.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION**

Your own GP –

Rehabilitation Services – Southport (01704) 704143

Ormskirk (01695) 656268

## **OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:**

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297



**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

**Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust**

Ormskirk & District General Hospital  
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ

Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital  
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN

Tel: (01704) 547471

**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

Telephone (01695) 656680

Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

We would welcome your feedback about your experience  
at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.  
Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following  
link:

[https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-  
visitors/fft/](https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/)

**Thank you**

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Ref: 12/3

Version: 5

Reviewed: May 2023

Next Review: May 2026