

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

# Dupuytren's contracture

Dupuytren's disease is a thickening and shortening of the layer of flesh just under the skin of the palm. It can cause lumps or dimples in the skin of the palm and can draw fingers down into a bent position.



### What causes it?

There is a layer of tissue, called fascia, under the skin of the palm which helps keep the skin from sliding around when you grip things. In some people, this tissue shortens and pulls on the skin and on the fingers. The ring and little fingers are affected more than the others, although any or all of the fingers may be involved.

It is a common condition, appearing for no clear reason and unrelated to occupation. It affects more men than women and may run in families. It is painless and benign, but unpredictable - some people will only have a lump, others have a very difficult problem with severely bent fingers. It does not damage the flexor tendons (the 'guiders').

### Surgery

Surgery aims to restore hand function but does not cure the disease.

A 'zig-zag' incision is made in the palm and/or fingers and the affected tissue is removed. If your finger has been bent for a long time, it might not be possible for the surgeon to regain full straightness of your fingers. Recurrence of the problem following surgery is possible.

After surgery, a therapy programme of wound care, scar management, exercises and night-time splinting is important to get the best result.

### Splintage

In order to gain the most from your operation, a moulded night splint will be fitted, holding your fingers as straight as possible. You will need to wear it for four to six months. The aim of the splint is to maintain the results of the surgery.

**Please bring your splint with you to every appointment in Therapy Services.**

### Exercises

These must be started now, despite the stitches, to get the full movement of the fingers (as directed by your therapist):

**1) Stretch your fingers up straight.**



## 2) Roof top.

Bend from your knuckles. Keep the rest of your finger joints straight.



## 3) Half fist.

Bend from your knuckles and then bend the next joint up. Keep the last joint straight.



## 4) Full fist.

Bend all of your finger joints.



**If you have any questions or concerns about your exercises or your condition please contact your therapist:**

On:

- (01623) 622515, extension 4271 for **King's Mill Hospital.**
- (01623) 622515, extension 5885 for **Newark Hospital.**

**For appointment queries please contact Therapy Services reception on (01623) 622515, extension 3221.**

**You should not miss your appointment with the therapist if one has been requested.**

## Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet (if relevant) please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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