

Camptodactyly in Children

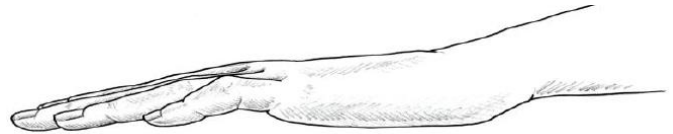
Hand Therapy treatment. Information for parents and children.

This leaflet offers more information about the hand therapy treatment available for children with camptodactyly. This leaflet is in conjunction with the "Camptodactyly in children" leaflet from the Plastic Surgery team. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is camptodactyly and why have I / my child got it?

Camptodactyly (camp-toe-dak-tilly) is an abnormal bending of the middle joint of a finger not caused by an accident or injury, when the finger is pulled towards the palm of the hand.

The cause is not known but is thought to be due to an imbalance with the tendons that bend and straighten the finger. It may also be because the skin or soft tissue is too tight or shortened in the palm of the hand. These tissues can tighten and cause the middle joint of the finger to become so stiff that it cannot be straightened even by using the other hand to push it.



Camptodactyly is usually present at birth, but can also be first noticed when a child has a growth spurt, for example when a teenager.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The middle joint of the affected finger(s) will be bent forwards into the palm of the hand. It is most common in the little finger but is sometimes seen in the ring or middle fingers and can affect both hands.

The amount the finger bends will be different in different children.

Do I / my child need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

The doctors who assess you / your child may arrange an x-ray of the affected finger(s) although this is not always necessary. Often diagnosis is made from visual assessment of the hand.

What treatments are available?

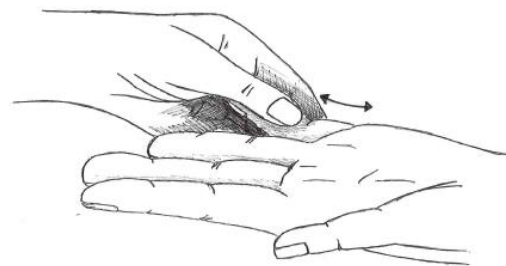
Treatment depends on how severe the finger deformity is. In mild cases, where the finger is only slightly bent and does not get worse over time, it may be that no treatment is required.

Where the deformity is more significant, treatment may involve massaging and stretching the fingers at home on a daily basis. For children over two years old, treatment may also include wearing a splint at night-time.

Massage

Before trying to stretch the finger(s) it may be helpful to massage the joints and tissues to warm them up and help them to loosen. Older children may be able to do this for themselves otherwise a parent or carer should help.

Use a moisturising cream or massage oil (making sure you / your child are not allergic to it) and rub it into the palm side of the finger/ hand.



You should use a firm pressure to massage but it should not be painful and should never break or harm the skin itself. You should support the back of the finger with the fingers of your other hand and use your thumb to massage the front and sides of the affected finger.

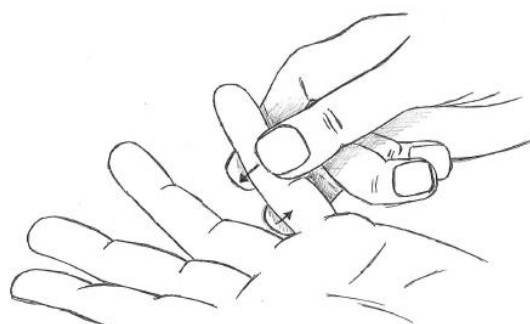
Complete the massage for _____ minutes and repeat _____ times a day.

Stretches

Younger children will require help from a parent / carer to stretch the affected finger(s) straight while older children should be able to do this for themselves. It is important never to push directly onto a joint – the pressure should always be on the bones either side of a joint.

To perform the stretch:

- Pinch the affected finger with your index and middle finger on the back of the finger (same side as the nail) and your thumb over the middle “pad” of the finger on the palm side.
- Use your thumb to push the finger straight. Use firm but gentle pressure so that you can feel a stretch, but it is not painful.



Complete the stretches _____ times, holding the stretch for _____ seconds, repeating _____ times a day.

Splint

A splint (supportive device) may be made for you, using a mouldable plastic to hold the affected finger(s) straight. Your therapist will advise you how long to wear the splint in the day and overnight. The splint should be comfortable – please contact the hand therapy team if you or your child are experiencing any discomfort in the splint so that it can be adjusted. If you have any concerns, stop wearing the splint until you see your therapist.

Your splint should be worn as follows:

Surgery

In rare cases an operation may be required to correct the camptodactyly. This is normally only necessary in extreme cases, where stretching and splinting has failed to make a difference or if the deformity is causing significant functional difficulties. This will be assessed by your Plastic Surgeon in clinic.

What happens if I do not get treatment?

If you do not get treatment for camptodactyly then the affected finger(s) are likely to stay bent forever. The degree of bend may worsen as you grow, but it is unlikely to get straighter without treatment.

Useful sources of information

British Society for Surgery to the Hand <https://www.bssh.ac.uk>

Contact REACH, the support group for children with congenital arm and hand problems, by visiting their website <http://www.reach.org.uk> or by telephoning 0845 130 6225.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about camptodactyly, please contact the hand therapy department on 020 8725 1038 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm) or the plastic surgery department on 020 8725 1134 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111



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