

Dupuytren's contracture: instructions following surgery

This leaflet offers information for patients following surgery for Dupuytren's contracture. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your therapist.

What is Dupuytren's contracture?

Dupuytren's contracture (also called Dupuytren's disease) is a condition in which there is fixed forward contracture of one or more fingers, caused by the development of a fibrous connection between the finger tendons and the skin of the palm. The connective tissue under the skin thickens and shortens and as it tightens it causes the fingers to bend inwards toward the palm. This condition is most common in the little and ring fingers. To achieve the best possible outcome following surgery, it is important to follow the instructions of your therapist.

Instructions for your splint

A thermoplastic splint has been made for you to help keep your fingers in a straight position following your surgery.

This splint must be worn as follows: _____

You may need to continue wearing the splint at night for up to nine months after your surgery, however your therapist will regularly assess whether this is needed. You **must not** get the splint hot or wet or try to alter it in any way. If it is uncomfortable let your therapist know as soon as possible. Please bring your splint to your appointments so that we can adjust it as needed.

Instructions for your wound

To aid your recovery, your wound will be covered with minimal or no dressings. It is important to follow the instructions provided by your nurse. Your dressings must not get wet so take care that they avoid water when washing and showering. Some sutures dissolve and some need to be removed; your nurse will inform you on the type you have and where to have them removed if needed. If you have any concerns about your wound, please contact the Hand Unit.

Instructions for exercise

It is important to exercise your hand to prevent your fingers from becoming stiff, however it is equally important that you do not over-exercise, as this may interfere with the healing process. Your hand therapist will work with you to develop an individual therapy programme to focus on goals and activities specific to your needs. Your therapist will provide a separate exercise sheet as needed.

General instructions

Use your hand for light activities, do not avoid using your hand as movement is an important part of the recovery.

- Do not drive until your wound has healed.
- Keep your arm elevated as much as possible.
- Do not over-exercise your fingers.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns following your surgery, please contact us on **020 8725 1038** (answer phone only).



Your therapist is: _____

For appointment enquiries, please phone **020 8725 0007**.

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 9am and 5pm, 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

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

