

# Trigger Thumb / Finger

This leaflet provides information about your child's trigger thumb or finger. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your child's care.

## What is a trigger thumb / finger?

Trigger thumb / finger is a condition which causes the affected digit to "lock" as it is bent towards the palm. It can be painful at the base of the digit when it is moved or has pressure applied to it. The digit can get stuck in the bent position and then suddenly "pop" straight.

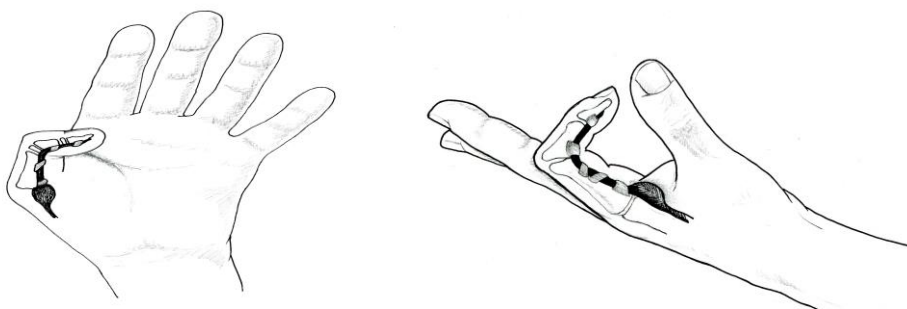
## What causes trigger thumb / finger?

Tendons connect bone to muscle and enable the joint to move as the muscle contracts. The tendon sits in a protective cover called the tendon sheath, which has a small amount of lubricating fluid within it to allow the tendon to move freely and smoothly within the sheath.

A trigger thumb / finger is caused when there is a problem with the tendon or sheath, for example swelling and inflammation, which causes roughness on the tendon surface meaning it can't slide easily through the tendon sheath. The exact reason for this occurring isn't fully known but it can occasionally appear to start following an injury to the hand.

## What are the symptoms of trigger thumb / finger?

A bent digit that appears to be 'stuck' in that position, there may also be a clicking of the digit on movement. Pain and tenderness may be experienced at the site of the triggering.



## What are the treatment options?

Trigger thumb / finger is not harmful and often resolves itself without the need for any active treatment. It is advisable to try to avoid activities that cause pain during this time.

Surgery involves releasing the tendon sheath which allows the tendon to run freely through it.

We usually wait for the child to be between three and four years of age before carrying out surgery. Your doctor will discuss the options with you and advise the best course of treatment for your child.

## What will the follow up be?

As trigger thumb / finger is often self-resolving it may just be followed up in the outpatients' clinic.

If surgery is considered the best option for your child, then this will be carried out as a day case procedure under general anaesthetic. You will have an opportunity to discuss the anaesthetic with the anaesthetist on the morning of the operation.

The dressing will remain in place for approximately two weeks. You will be given an appointment for your child to be seen in the Dragon Centre where the dressing will be removed and the wounds checked. At this stage your child may have another dressing applied or be left without a dressing, this will depend on how the wounds have healed. Your child will also be followed up in the Congenital Limb Clinic.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about trigger thumb/finger, please contact the plastic surgery department on 020 8725 1134 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Out of hours, please contact the on-call plastic surgery senior house officer via the hospital switchboard on 020 8672 1255.

You can also contact the paediatric plastic surgery clinical nurse specialist on 020 8725 2656 and leave a message on the answerphone. If your query or concern is urgent please don't leave a message but contact the on-call plastic surgery senior house officer.

For follow up appointments please contact the plastic surgery appointment desk on 020 8725 5855.

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## 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 wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto: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](http://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](http://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.



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