

# Dupuytren's Contracture: instructions following surgery

This leaflet provides 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 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 optimise your outcome after surgery. This splint must be worn as follows:

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You may need to continue wearing the splint for up to nine months after your surgery. Your therapist will assess and discuss with you when you no longer need to wear the splint. 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 all your appointments so that we can adjust it as needed.

## Instructions for your wound

Your wound will be left with minimal or no dressings to aid healing.

If your stitches need to be removed, this can be done either by a nurse at your GP surgery or in the Hand Unit, 10 to 14 days after surgery. If you are unsure, please confirm with your therapist.

To prevent infection, you must keep your wound clean and dry until it is healed.

## Instructions for exercise

It is important to exercise your hand to prevent your fingers from becoming stiff, however until the wound has fully healed 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.

**Your therapist is:** \_\_\_\_\_

For treatment enquiries, please telephone 020 8725 1038

For appointment enquiries, please telephone 020 8725 0007

**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 advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm  
Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

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

### **NHS UK**

The NHS 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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