



## Orthopaedic Department

# De Quervains Tenosynovitis

De Quervains Tenosynovitis is a condition where there is irritation or inflammation of the tendons at the base of the thumb. These tendons, which pass across the wrist, run in a sheath which is designed to allow lubrication and gliding with minimal friction.

In De Quervains disease the sheath becomes thickened and the tendon no longer runs smoothly, they catch on the sheath and this may be painful.

### Who develops it?

- Problems often occur after prolonged repetitive activity which may irritate the tendons;
- New mothers are prone to developing this problem due to the positions adopted when caring for a baby;
- Hormone changes in pregnancy may also contribute to its occurrence.

### Symptoms

Pain and swelling over the thumb side of the wrist which may radiate down the thumb or into the forearm. Pain is often worse with gripping and twisting movements.

### Treatment

- Rest and splinting, to restrict activities;
- Anti-inflammatory medication;
- Physiotherapy;
- Injection of a steroid and local anaesthetic to help reduce the inflammation and the swelling;
- Surgery.

### Surgery

- Surgery is usually done as a day case under a general anaesthetic. The aim of surgery is to open up the tendon sheath and allow the tendons to pass freely and comfortably;
- Following the surgery the hand will be heavily bandaged for the first few days. After this is removed you can exercise more freely to regain movement in the wrist, fingers and



## Patient Information

thumb;

- Stitches are removed in 10 -14 days. This is usually done by making an appointment at your GP practice;
- You may need to take painkillers and some patients may be referred to physiotherapy if necessary. Your surgeon will advise you.

### **How long will I be off work and when can I drive?**

This is only a guideline as people recover at different rates and it depends on the nature of your job:

- Light manual or desk work: two to three weeks
- Heavy manual work: four to six weeks.
- You can drive when you can make a full pain free fist; usually after a minimum of one week.

### **Complications**

A small number of patients may experience the following problems:

- Stiffness of the wrist, fingers or thumb;
- Swelling;
- Pain – sometimes due to the nearby nerve becoming irritated;
- Infection.

In the event of you experiencing any problems please do not hesitate to contact your GP or the Day Surgery Unit.

### **Further Information**

If you need further information please contact your Therapy Department:

**University Hospital, Coventry and Warwickshire: Tel 024 7696 6016**

**Rugby, St Cross Hospital: Tel 01788 663257** For further information please visit our hand service web site <http://tinyurl.com/uhcwhand>

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6861 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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