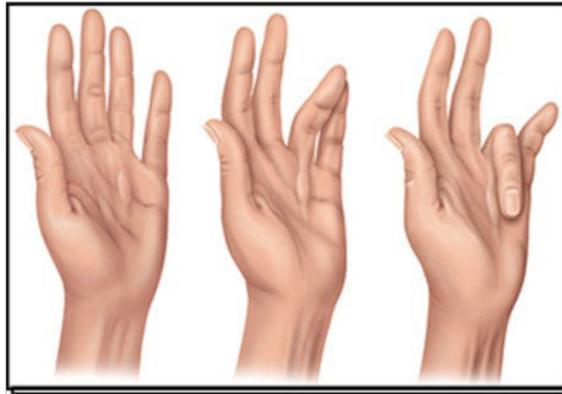




South Eastern Hand Therapy

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Dupuytren's Disease

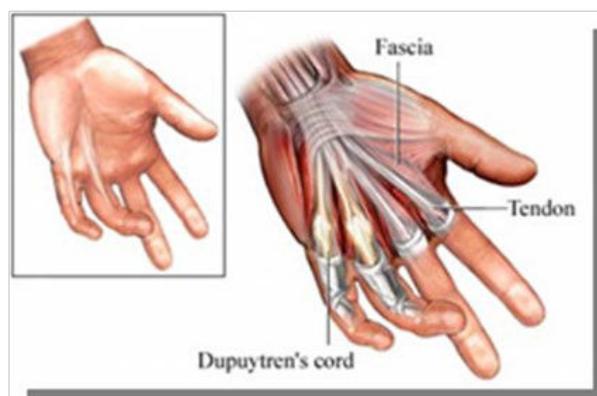


Dupuytren's disease is the thickening and shrinking of the fascia (soft tissue) of the hand. It can cause lumps or dimples in the skin of the palm, and can force the fingers and thumb to bend towards the palm.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

There is a layer of tissue, called fascia, under the skin of the palm which helps keep the skin from sliding around when you grip things. It is not completely understood but in some people, this tissue shrinks, and pulls on the skin and on the fingers.

The problem appears to be inherited, and usually begins in adulthood for no clear reason. It is painless and benign, but unpredictable - some people will only have a lump, others a very difficult problem with severely bent fingers. The ring and the small fingers are affected more often than the others, although any or all of the digits may be involved.



CONSERVATIVE TREATMENT

Therapy is unlikely to have much if any success in reversing the disease process. Conservative therapy is sometimes suggested in extreme cases to relieve pain and prevent secondary issues from occurring.

TREATMENT

The normal course of treatment is surgical release when the disease is beginning to cause the finger to bend and have an affect on normal functioning of the hand. A variety of surgical procedures are available and are best discussed with your surgeon.

Collagenase injections may also be used to treat the Dupuytren's. The cords may be injected by the surgeon followed by manipulation of the fingers a few days later. As with surgical release, hand therapy will follow.

HAND THERAPY

Following surgery or collagenase injection, hand therapy may involve:

- splinting to keep the fingers straight
- Oedema control to reduce swelling
- Exercises to regain flexibility
- Scar management to reduce scarring, often involving massage with hand cream and the use of silicone products

If you have any questions or problems, please phone your therapist on 8560 0293

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