

# Dupuytren's Contracture

Dupuytren's contracture is when the fibrous tissue layer lying underneath of the skin for the fingers and palm thickens. Even though it is painless, the tightening and thickening of the tissue can cause the fingers to end up curling. The condition tends to be more prevalent in men than it does in women.

## Dupuytren's Contracture Anatomy

Just underneath the skin of your palm there is a cloth-like skin layer that reinforces the skin. Dupuytren's causes the fascia to diminish in size, which will pull the fingers down into a bent position. The actively shrinking areas are referred to as nodules. They tend to feel like calluses. Cords are the final result of shrinking, which feels like strings underneath of the skin.

There is a classification system called Tubiana staging will work out the severity of your contracture depending on the degrees of finger bend.

Dupuytren's contracture occurs very slowly over a period of months/years. It starts with the little finger, and then progresses to the 4<sup>th</sup> finger and further into the hand. The condition is not considered suspicious or dangerous, the biggest issues are the aesthetics and also minor loss of hand function.

Typically the most common cause is hereditary, so its passed on in the genes.

But smoking, heavy drinking, a previously broken hand, and diabetes can all increase your chances of developing Dupuytren's.



## How to Treat Dupuytren's Contracture:

### 1. Steroid Injections

When the lump becomes painful, an injection of corticosteroid, which is a powerful anti-inflammatory, can help to alleviate some of the pain felt. In certain instances, it can prevent the contracture from progressing. Several injections might be required to achieve a lasting effect.

### 2. Splints

Splinting helps to keep your fingers straighter, to reduce the onset of the contracture. It is best used in the early stages.

### 3. Surgery

Surgery for the condition involves the removal and division of the thickened band to restore motion in the finger. Depending on the situation, the wound might be left open and given time to heal on its own. It might be necessary to explore the use of a skin graft.

Even though complications are rare, there are risks associated with surgery such as damage to the blood vessels and nerves, as well as infection. The finger could end up being permanently stiff, but this is not common.

Soreness and swelling is expected following the surgery, but any severe problems are rare. Elevating your hand above your heart and moving the fingers gently will help to alleviate swelling, pain and stiffness following surgery. Physical therapy is often helpful for recovering after the surgery. Certain exercises will often help to strengthen hands and aid in finger movement. Most of the time, people will be able to move their fingers a lot better than what they did before the surgery.

### Tips:

- Roughly, 20 percent of all patients will end up experiencing a certain degree of recurrence of the condition requiring additional surgery.
- Even though there isn't a specific way to cure and stop the contracture from occurring, it is not considered dangerous.
- The condition will often slowly progress and won't be troublesome until quite some time down the line.
- Based upon the degree of the contracture, it might never extend beyond that of lumps in the palm of the hand.
- Those who drink large quantities of alcohol are prone to the condition.
- As you grow older, the frequency of the condition occurring tends to increase.