

## Patient information

# Trigger finger and thumb: information for children

## What are trigger finger and trigger thumb?

In children, trigger finger and thumb are not caused by an injury or other medical issues. The condition occurs when the tendons that move the finger and thumb enlarge and don't slide smoothly through the tendon sheath (or tunnel) when the finger is moved. Although it is rarely noticed at birth, trigger thumb and finger can be present in infancy but most commonly noticed between the ages of one and four.

This can cause your child's finger / thumb to pop or click.

The most common digit involved is the thumb.

At the age of one, approximately three out in 1,000 children can have this condition.

In severe cases the thumb or finger affected cannot be straightened and will need surgery to correct it.

## Signs and symptoms

Some common signs of trigger finger and thumb include:

- Stiffness in the affected finger or thumb
- A painful popping or clicking when the finger or thumb is bent and straightened
- A finger or thumb that gets stuck in either a bent or straight position
- Symptoms that are worse in the morning

## Treatment

In very young children, trigger thumb or finger will resolve on its own for up to 30 percent of children before they reach their first birthday. After this age some

children will still improve without the need for surgery but some children will need treatment. For this reason, children are observed to see how they improve.

Surgery to correct trigger thumb is usually performed when a child is between two and four years of age. In this procedure, your child's surgeon will release the tendon from the tendon sheath where it is catching, allowing the tendon to glide more smoothly.

Your child will be able to go home the same day as their trigger finger or trigger thumb release surgery. They will need to leave a soft dressing over the incision for two weeks after surgery. Use of the affected hand will be restricted during this time.

Once the dressing is removed, your child will be able to use their hand normally and without restriction. The absorbable sutures used during surgery will fall out on their own within two weeks of surgery.

## Trigger Thumb



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