

Basal Thumb Osteoarthritis

What is Basal Thumb Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a disease which affects the joints in the body. There is loss of the smooth cartilage covering the surface of bones and there may be visible changes in the appearance of the joint.

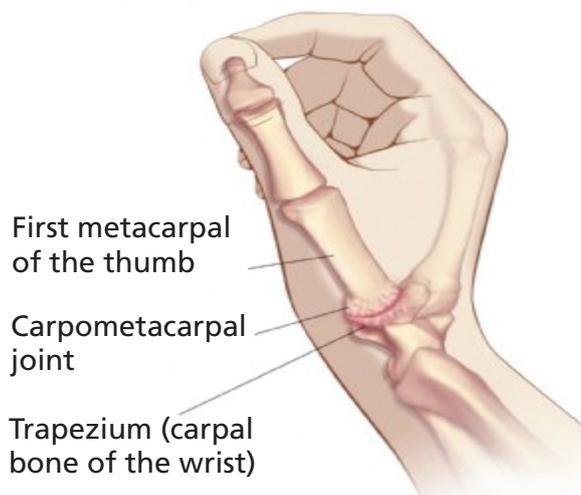
For more information on osteoarthritis go to the ARC website at www.arc.org.uk

The joint at the base of the thumb (carpometacarpal joint) is a common site of osteoarthritis. The joint is between the metacarpal bone of the thumb and the trapezium. The picture helps illustrate this.

What are the symptoms of Basal Thumb Osteoarthritis?

- Pain at the base of the thumb.
- Swelling and tenderness at the base of the thumb.
- Difficulty with activities involving gripping eg. opening jars, turning a key.
- Stiffness and loss of movement at the thumb.

CMC (Basal) Joint Arthritis



What can cause Basal Thumb Osteoarthritis?

- Often there is no specific cause for Osteoarthritis but there can be genetic factors.
- More common in women than men. More common from age 45 upwards.
- Previous fracture to the thumb can increase your risk of developing osteoarthritis at this site.
- Certain leisure / occupational activities which include repetitive use of the hand.
- Not all patients with osteoarthritis experience pain.

How is Basal Thumb Osteoarthritis diagnosed?

- Your description of the symptoms and the history.
- Physical examination and tests to reproduce your symptoms.
- Most patients do not require further investigations to diagnose Basal Thumb Osteoarthritis.
- A small number of patients may require an x-ray.

How is Basal Thumb Osteoarthritis treated?

- Activity modification.
- Pain killers or anti-inflammatory medication. Your GP or local pharmacist can advise
- Splinting is useful for some patients.
- Exercises to maintain motion and strengthen.
- Injection of steroid.

Will I need surgery?

Surgery is generally a last resort if other treatment has failed.

There are various options available and a hand surgeon would discuss the options with you.

Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment please let us know by speaking to a member of our staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or email lch.pals@nhs.net

We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.