

# Trigger finger

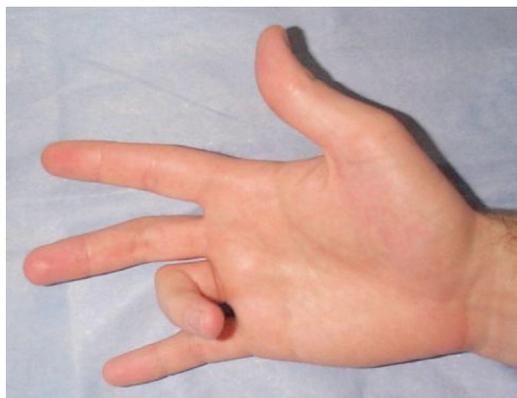
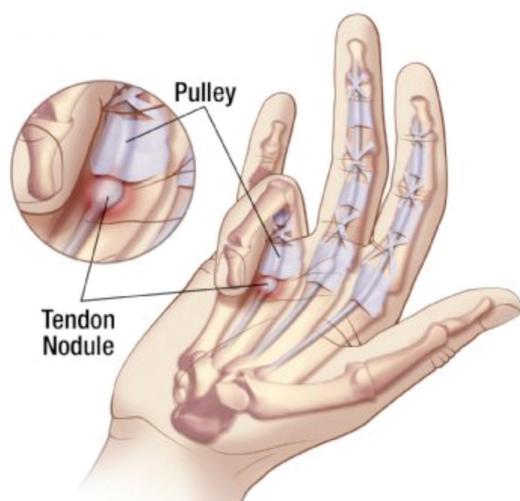
## What is trigger finger/thumb?

It is a condition that affects the flexor tendons in the hand which bend the fingers and thumb.

Tendons are fibrous cords that attach muscle in the forearm to bones in the fingers and thumb, allowing the digits to move when the muscles contract.

Systems of pulleys keep the tendon close to the bone and prevent it from bowing out as the fingers bend.

Tendons should glide smoothly in a tendon sheath but if swelling develops on the tendon it can interfere with the normal gliding action resulting in pain and sticking of the fingers or thumb. See pictures below.



## What are the symptoms?

Typically there is pain in the palm and sticking or locking of the fingers or thumb when they bend. The pain and locking is often worse in a morning.

## How is the condition treated?

- Some patients do not opt to have any treatment if symptoms are mild and do not interfere significantly with daily function.
- **Steroid injections** are commonly offered to reduce swelling which can reduce pain and locking and are successful in around 70-80% of cases. Up to 2 injections can be performed per affected digit. Success rate is lower in diabetic patients.
- If injections fail and the problem continues, **surgery** may be indicated. Surgery involves a small procedure under local anaesthetic.

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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](mailto:lch.pals@nhs.net)

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