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Post-Surgical Information
TRIGGER FINGER RELEASE



PROBLEM: The tendons that flex a finger or thumb become swollen or thickened, forming a nodule. They cannot smoothly glide through the series of narrow collars or “pulleys”, called the flexor tendon sheath, which aligns the tendons along the bone.

PROCEDURE: A portion of the flexor tendon sheath is released to eliminate obstruction of the tendon nodule and allow smooth finger or thumb motion.

WHAT TO EXPECT: Most patients experience immediate elimination of catching or locking with digital motion. Pain associated with the incision will be present but should resolve in time. Some swelling and lack of motion is common, but this generally improves with healing and exercise. If joint stiffness is present before surgery, tendon release will not necessarily improve that specific problem.

PAIN AFTER SURGERY: Local anesthetic is usually injected into the incision during surgery to minimize pain during the procedure and for a few hours afterward. Pain medication is prescribed for use as needed. Most patients require pain medication for only a few days after surgery. Soreness around the incision on the palm is typical and may last two to three months, although this usually resolves sooner.

INCISION & DRESSINGS: A soft, sterile dressing is placed around the hand at the end of the procedure. If the dressing is too tight, the outer elastic bandage should be unwrapped and rewrapped more loosely, leaving the deeper gauze intact. The entire dressing should be removed five days after surgery. The incision and a few black nylon sutures will be visible and should be kept clean and dry until office follow-up. A Band-Aid may be used to cover the incision in the meantime. Light hand washing is fine after the first five days, but soaking or scrubbing should be avoided.

FOLLOW-UP AND RECOVERY: A follow-up visit for incision check and removal of any sutures should be scheduled within two weeks after surgery. Provided that healing is appropriate, no further appointments are typically needed. Soreness at the surgical site may require up to several weeks for resolution. Persistent soreness, weakness, swelling, or stiffness may make treatment by a hand therapist necessary in a few patients. Patients who have a trigger digit are likely to develop others in the future.