

Information for patients

# Ultrasound Guided Trigger Finger Release

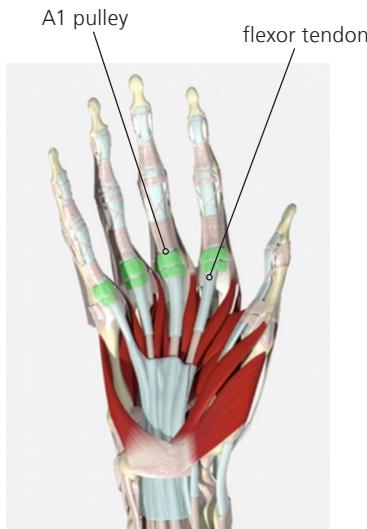


## Radiology

## What is trigger finger?

Trigger finger is when a flexor tendon, which bends your finger, becomes stuck in a pulley in the palm of your hand. This can be like trying to pull a piece of string with a knot in it through a straw, it will get stuck and then suddenly give way allowing further movement.

Sometimes, the tendon becomes swollen, or the pulley becomes tight: this may result in triggering of the finger. Some people have a tendency for multiple fingers to trigger at different times. This is more common as we age and in people with diabetes. Triggering of the finger is often worse in the mornings and can be noted on waking.



## What is an ultrasound guided trigger finger release?

It is a minimally invasive procedure that uses ultrasound scanning to guide a needle or instrument to cut the constricted tendon sheath (pulley) that is causing a finger to 'trigger' or lock. It is performed by a radiologist, and a local anaesthetic is used to numb the area. The ultrasound scan images are used to guide a needle to carefully cut and release the tight pulley, allowing the tendon to move freely. The ultrasound scan confirms the pulley is fully released before removing the needle.

## Why would I need this procedure?

Prior to having a more advanced procedure, corticosteroid injections can be helpful. If the injection(s) has not improved your symptoms, you may require a more advanced procedure, such as ultrasound guided trigger finger release or surgical release.

## Is the procedure painful?

For some people the injection is a little painful, but all measures are taken to ensure pain is kept to a minimum. If you have any questions about the pain of the procedure, discuss this with the person performing the procedure.

## What are the alternative treatments?

You can opt to have further steroid injections as this can often resolve your symptoms. However as previously described, if tried and failed, you may elect for a more advanced treatment. Instead of ultrasound guided trigger finger release, you may decide to have open surgical release.

## What are the potential risks and side effects?

- Risk of infection is always a risk in any surgical procedure. If this occurs, it will usually require antibiotics, and you should seek an immediate medical review by your GP or attend the Emergency Department
- Potential damage to the nerves, leading to numbness in part of the finger will be minimised with the use of ultrasound guidance
- Failure of the release
- Poor tendon function with 'bowstringing'
- Bruising around the injection site is not uncommon

It has been demonstrated that trigger finger release with ultrasound guidance is safe. This procedure has been shown to have less risk of post operation infection than an open procedure, with a similar success rate. You will get immediate feedback and know if this procedure has worked whilst still in clinic. There are no known risks from ultrasound scans

## Are there times I should not have this intervention?

Yes, if you have one of the following:

- Had a reaction previously to local anaesthetics
- Have a current skin infection near the injection site or infection elsewhere in the body
- Feel unwell
- Do not want a local anaesthetic injection
- If you are on anticoagulation therapy (blood thinning), we need to discuss this with you. Please call the department on **01691 404106**

## What are the expected benefits of treatment?

Improved finger movement.

## Will I have an anaesthetic?

You will have a local anaesthetic injected into the painful, triggering region in the palm of your hand.

## How will I feel afterwards?

You may have altered sensation around the injection site for approximately 2 hours, with a feeling of pins and needles as the anaesthetic wears off. You may have some bruising at the procedure site. Some discomfort may be present in the days following the procedure. If you require pain relief, consider simple pain medications that you can purchase at your pharmacy or discuss with your GP if you require further advice.

## How long will I be in hospital?

The procedure will take approximately 30 minutes. After the procedure, you will be taken to our “post-procedure room” where we will offer you a drink and biscuits. We would expect you to stay here for around 15-30 minutes. We would recommend allocating 90 minutes time in the hospital for the whole appointment and after-care.

## **How soon will I be able to resume normal activities?**

There is no limitation on resuming normal activities however it is advisable to refrain from strenuous activities for 24 hours after the procedure and you should move your fingers straight away. You should keep the wound clean with a dressing for 24 hours.

## **Will I have to come back to hospital?**

Not routinely, unless you are still having a problem. We will telephone you at two weeks to find out how you are after the procedure. You may receive a follow-up appointment with an upper limb Consultant if you still have your usual symptoms.

## **When can I return to work?**

You can return to work as soon as you feel able to. We recommend you have the rest of the day off work.

## **Can I drive home after this procedure?**

No. We do not recommend you drive home after this procedure. Please make alternative transport arrangements.

## **Consent**

We will ask for your written consent on the day of the procedure, however, you may withdraw your consent at any time. Please discuss this with your medical team.

## **Who can I contact if I have any questions?**

If you have a query regarding your appointment, **please call the department on 01691 404106**

**PLEASE FILL OUT THE REQUEST FOR TREATMENT FORM ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.**

## Request for treatment

I have read through all the information above and wish to be seen in the ultrasound clinic and potentially have my treatment on the same day.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Or

I have read through all the information above and would prefer to be seen by the surgical team.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

## Notes:

## If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: [rjah.pals.office@nhs.net](mailto:rjah.pals.office@nhs.net)

## Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet.  
Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and  
Liaison Service (PALS) email: [rjah.pals.office@nhs.net](mailto:rjah.pals.office@nhs.net)

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