

What is it?

Dupuytren's Contracture happens when the skin under your hand slowly thickens and gets tight. This can force the fingers to bend towards the palm, like a claw. It can affect any finger but mostly affects the ring finger, then the little finger and then the middle finger.

It can limit movement in your hands. This can make it hard to do some tasks. While the cause is unknown, some research suggests it may be passed down through families. This skin concern is also linked to health concerns like epilepsy, alcoholism and diabetes.

What will my GP do now?

Some people can have Dupuytren's Contracture and not need treatment at all. Sometimes surgery can help. Your GP will talk to you about the right treatment for you and will refer you to a surgeon if needed.

There is not enough research that supports using hand treatments, splints, exercise or steroid injections to treat this problem.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will want to check in with you from time to time to see how you are. If your symptoms get worse, your GP may refer you to a surgeon.

If you have surgery, your GP can arrange a splint to use during your recovery period. You may need to wear a night splint for three months.

Your hand function may take several months to get back to normal. Your wounds can be tender during this time. After your surgery, your GP can also refer you to a specialist for hand therapy.

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- What are the treatment options?*
- How do I know if I need treatment?*
- Will surgery improve my symptoms?*



What can I do?

Your hand may feel better with some gentle massage and stretching. You can do the following:

- Gently massage the thickened tissues of your palm
- Stretch your fingers away from the palm
- Put heat on your palm to help loosen the tissue

What supports are available?

The South Western Sydney Hand Centre (Fairfield Hand Clinic) is a hand surgery service for all South Western Sydney LGAs (except Bankstown). Your GP can refer you to this centre. Your GP can also refer you to a private hand surgeon in South Western Sydney.

Where can I learn more?

- **Better Health Channel** – Dupuytren's contracture: betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- **Healthdirect Australia** – Dupuytren's contracture: healthdirect.gov.au