

FULL CIRCLE HAND THERAPY

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS



CMC ARTHRITIS AKA BASE OF THUMB ARTHRITIS

Osteoarthritis occurs when there is a loss of joint space between two bones. One of the most common joints in the hand to develop osteoarthritis is at the base of the thumb. Due to the normal mobility of this joint, it is prone to wear and tear, which results in loss of the cartilage or cushion between the joint. Arthritis at the base of the thumb is also known as CMC arthritis or basal joint arthritis.

CAUSES

The cause of arthritis at the base of the thumb is thought to be the result of a combination of factors including family history, repetitive pinching or twisting of the thumb and general overuse. Thumb arthritis can also occur when there is a history of trauma, fractures or dislocations of the thumb.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of basal joint arthritis are pain with pinching, gripping and general thumb use. Using a key, turning a door knob or opening a jar can be painful with this type of arthritis. Thumb pain may also occur at night or when resting. Individuals with arthritis at the base of the thumb may also notice swelling at the area of pain.

TREATMENT

Treatment for basal joint arthritis can be non-operative or operative. The initial conservative treatment is rest, modification of daily activities and splinting for support and sleep. If the symptoms are mild, a doctor may prescribe an anti-inflammatory medicine, a referral to a hand therapist and/or suggest a cortisone injection to help decrease the pain. If the symptoms persist and begin to limit hand function, the physician may recommend surgery.



HOW CAN WE HELP?

Initially, we will provide education, adaptive equipment, activity modification and special exercises to help reduce pain. A custom-fabricated brace or orthosis that will be made to allow the thumb joint to rest and will provide support while performing daily activities. Following surgery, we will provide a custom made orthosis and exercises to improve range of motion, strength and regain the function of the hand.

