FULL CIRCLE HAND THERAPY

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS

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DUPUYTREN'S DISEASE

Dupuytren's disease, also known as Dupuytren's contracture, is a condition in the hand that causes the fascia, or layer of tissue beneath the skin, to tighten and draw the fingers into the palm. Dupuytren's disease develops over time and is most common in the ring and small fingers; however, it may be found in any digit of the hand.
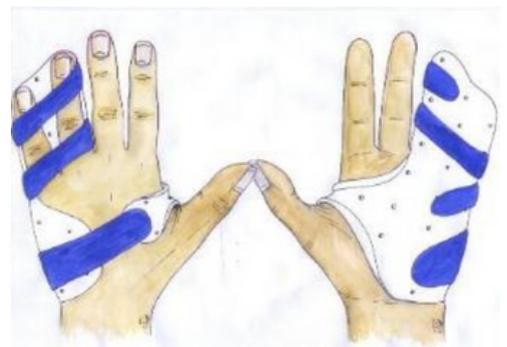
CAUSES

The exact cause of Dupuytren's disease is not known. Dupuytren's disease is found most often in older males. Smoking, diabetes and having a family member with Dupuytren's disease are all risk factors.

SYMPTOMS

Initially you may feel a lump or thickening of tissue in the palm; however, with time, Dupuytren's disease can progress. Thick cords may develop in the palm and make it difficult to open the hand to hold change, or to place the hand in a pocket. The cords may also become sensitive and limit the ability to grip tools. The tightness of skin in the palm and the bent position of the fingers may take months or years to develop. Dupuytren's disease can occur in both hands, although one hand is typically worse than the other.

TREATMENT

Dupuytren's disease is diagnosed by a physical exam. Your doctor may monitor the nodules for change in size or thickness. For many, the nodules in the palm do not progress or become painful; however, when the fingers become stiff and limit the ability to use the hand, a referral to a hand surgeon is necessary. Surgery may be performed to remove the nodules and thick tissue in the palm. Your surgeon may also recommend a special injection and manipulation to straighten the fingers.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

A hand therapist works closely with the doctor to help treat Dupuytren's disease after surgery. Post-operative care involves fabrication of an orthosis to keep the fingers extended, a home exercise program to perform active range of motion and scar management and a strengthening program to regain functional use of the hand.