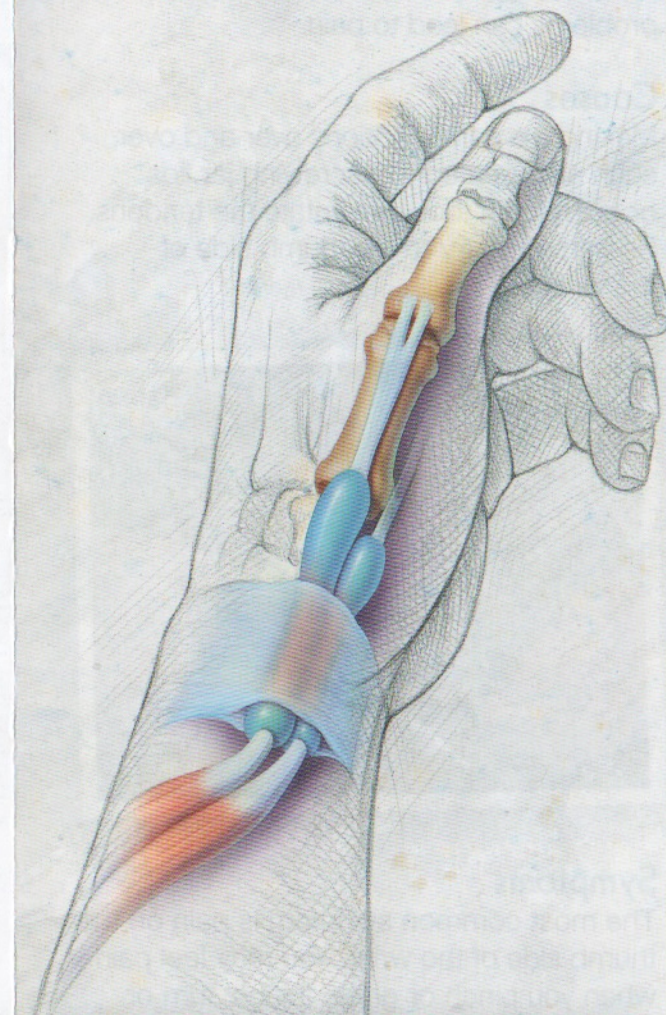
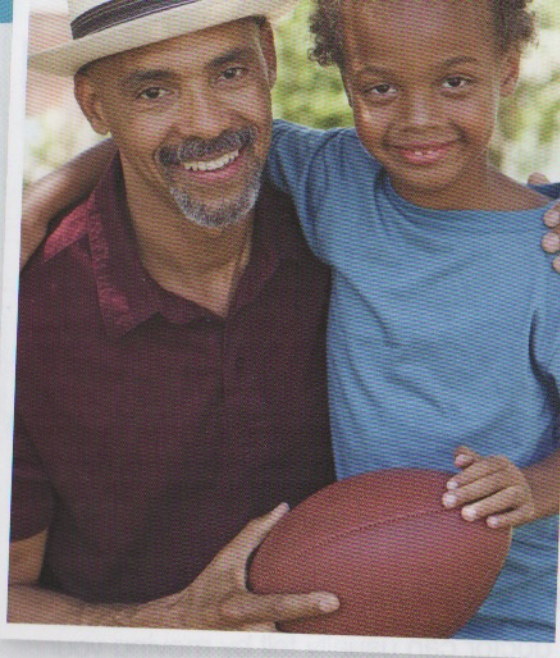


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DE QUERVAIN TENOSYNOVITIS



Relieving Pain
in Your Thumb



Using Your Thumb Again

The goal of treatment is to relieve your pain and allow you to use your thumb again. Once the tendons have healed, your doctor may prescribe exercises, or refer you to a hand therapist, to help you regain strength and movement in your thumb. By working with your doctor and following your treatment plan, you should be able to get back to your normal activities.

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Only your doctor can diagnose and treat a medical problem.
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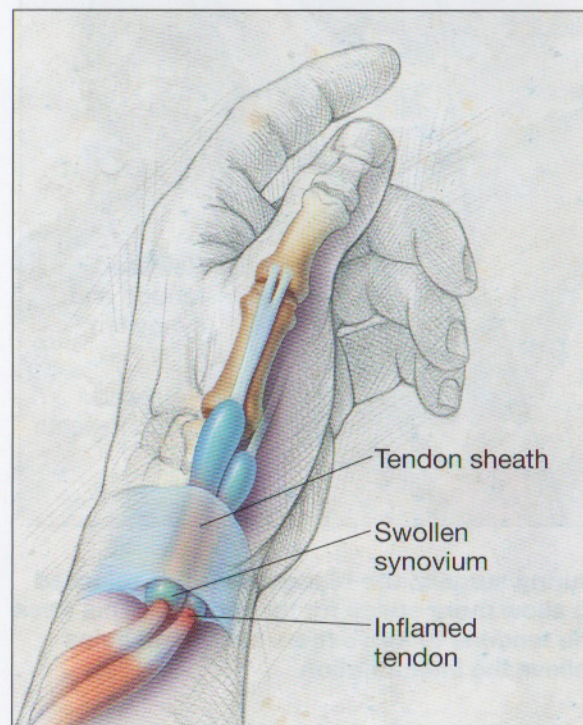
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Inside Your Thumb

Tendons connect muscles in your wrist and forearm to the bones in your thumb. The tendons are surrounded by a protective tendon sheath. This sheath is lined with synovium. The synovium produces a fluid that allows the tendons to slide easily when you straighten your thumb. If the tendons are irritated or injured, they become inflamed.

When the Tendons Are Inflamed

When the tendons are inflamed, they cause the lining of the tendon sheath to swell and thicken. Or, the tendon sheath itself may thicken. Then the sheath pinches the tendons. They can no longer slide easily inside the sheath, and straightening the thumb and wrist may become painful.



What Is De Quervain Tenosynovitis?

De Quervain tenosynovitis occurs when the tissue in the thumb side of the wrist is inflamed. **Tendons** (cordlike fibers that attach muscle to bone) and **synovium** (a slick membrane that allows the tendons to move easily) become swollen. These problems can lead to pain.

Causes

Making the same motions over and over, such as repeatedly unscrewing jar lids or grasping a tool, can irritate the tendons. So can an injury to the thumb side of the wrist.



Symptoms

The most common symptom is pain on the thumb side of the wrist. You may feel pain when you pinch or grasp things, turn or twist your wrist, or make a fist. The thumb may also “catch” when you bend it. The thumb side of the wrist may be tender to the touch, and you may feel a small “knot.”



▶▶ Pain when you make a fist and bend your wrist toward your little finger is one of the signs of an inflamed tendon.

Diagnosis and Treatment

Your doctor can usually tell by moving your thumb whether the tendons are inflamed. Treatment will depend on how severe the pain is. Your doctor will review your options with you. Be sure to ask any questions you have.

Evaluating Your Thumb

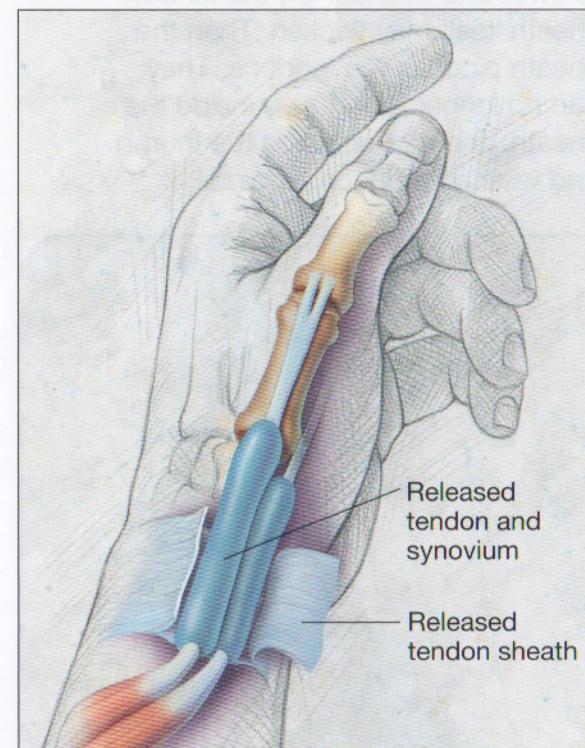
To diagnose de Quervain tenosynovitis, you may be asked to make a fist with your fingers over your thumb. Your doctor will then bend your wrist toward your little finger. A sharp pain in the wrist is a sign that the tendons are inflamed.

Nonsurgical Treatment

Just taking a break from the activities that caused your symptoms may be enough. Your doctor may also have you wear a splint for a few weeks to rest the thumb and wrist. To help reduce swelling, you may be given an oral anti-inflammatory medication to take, such as ibuprofen or naproxen. Your doctor may also suggest an injection of cortisone (a stronger anti-inflammatory) around the affected tendons.

Surgery

If other treatments don't relieve your pain, your doctor may recommend surgery. The sheath that surrounds the tendons is released so the tendons can move more easily. This helps reduce the inflammation and allows you to straighten your thumb without pain. Surgery often takes just a few minutes and is done with local anesthetic. You may go home the same day. You will probably have a splint or dressing on your wrist for a few days while the tissue heals. Your doctor will discuss the benefits and risks of surgery with you.



During surgery, the tendon sheath is released to allow more space for the tendons. This frees the tendons to move more easily and helps relieve the inflammation.