

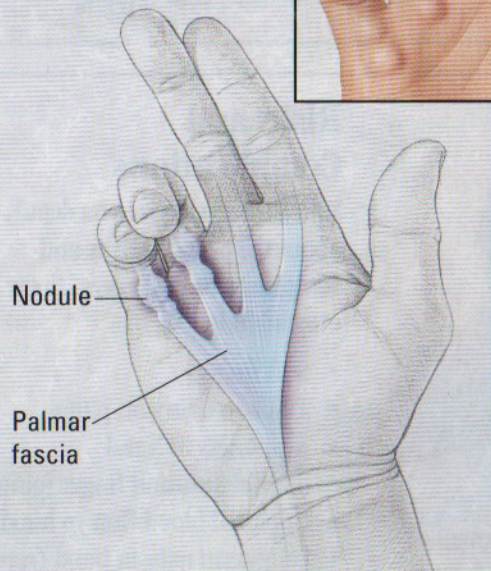
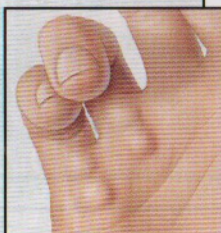
## Inside Your Hand

Your palm contains a tough, fibrous layer of tissue called the **palmar fascia**. It forms a protective barrier between your skin and tendons (tissue that connects muscle to bone). The fascia gives your palm a flexible firmness.

## When the Fascia Thickens

For reasons not fully known, the palmar fascia can thicken. When this happens, it contracts (pulls in). Small, hard knots called **nodules** may form just under the skin near the base of the fingers. Hard bands also may form across the palm. Nodules, bands, and the contracting palmar fascia can make your fingers (especially the ring and little fingers) bend toward your palm.

Nodules on the palmar fascia can cause the ring and little fingers to bend toward your palm.



## As You Heal

By doing your exercises and wearing a splint if needed, you can speed up recovery. It may take a few weeks before you have use of your hand. But with time, you will regain most of your hand function.



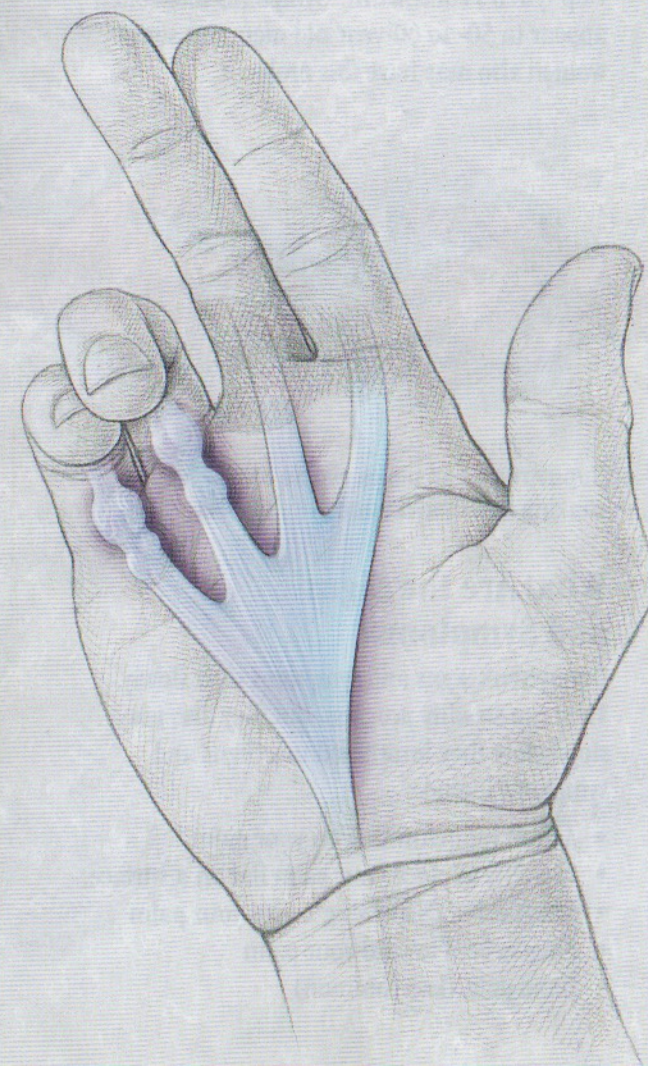
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# Dupuytren's Contracture





# What Is Dupuytren's Contracture?

Dupuytren's contracture is a disease that can lead to limited use of your hand. This may happen when certain tissue in the palm thickens. While it often doesn't cause pain, it can make it hard to straighten your fingers.

## Who Gets It?

People whose families come from northern European countries are the most likely to get Dupuytren's contracture. Symptoms most often appear in 50- to 60-year-old men. But some women also may have this problem.



Dupuytren's can make simple tasks like shaking hands awkward.

## What Are the Signs and Symptoms?

Dupuytren's signs and symptoms start slowly. They can steadily progress. But they also may stop before they limit hand use. Signs and symptoms include:

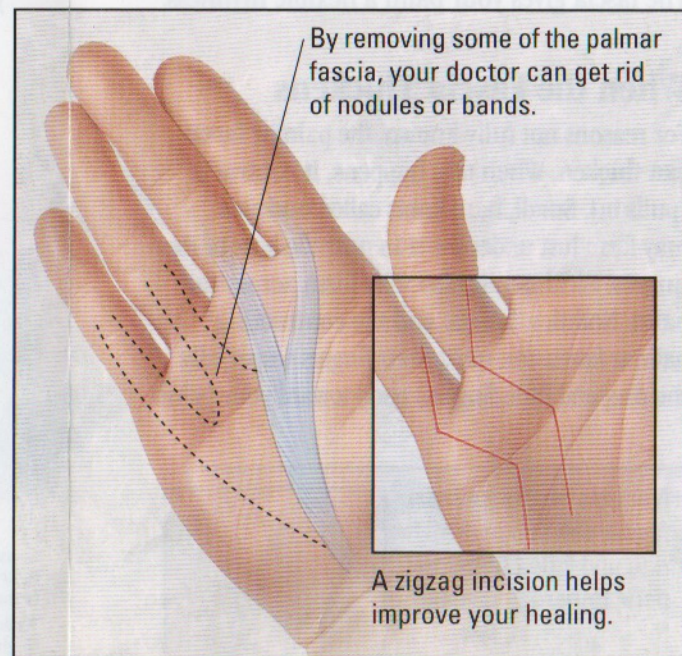
- A hard lump forming on your palm
- Inability to place your palm flat on a surface
- Scarlike bands forming across your palm
- Fingers bent toward your palm
- Hand pain (less common)

# Treating Dupuytren's Contracture

The only way to treat Dupuytren's is surgery. It's not a cure. Symptoms can recur in a few years. But surgery helps many patients regain a better range of finger motion. Your doctor may suggest surgery if use of your hand is sharply limited. Talk with your doctor to find out if surgery is a good choice for you.

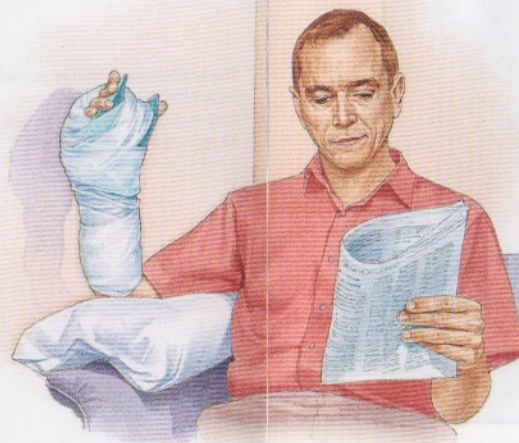
## Your Surgery Experience

Surgery removes some of the palmar fascia. This can take a few hours. You may be awake, but drowsy, during surgery. Or, you may have **general anesthesia** (where you "sleep"). Your doctor may use a zigzag-shaped incision to reach the fascia. A zigzag allows better healing and finger motion. When surgery is complete, part of your incision may be left open to help drainage. As you heal, it will close on its own. A thick bandage or cast will be placed over your hand and forearm. You most likely will go home the same day of surgery.



## After Surgery

In the first few days, keep your hand elevated to reduce swelling. And take any pain pills your doctor may have prescribed. If you're asked to use ice, follow your doctor's advice. In about a week, your stitches will be removed. You then may need to wear a splint. Soon, you'll start hand therapy and exercises that can help you heal.



## Risks and Complications

Your doctor will give you details about the possible risks and complications of surgery. These may include:

- Stiff fingers
- Thick scarring on palm
- Numbness in hand
- Swelling around finger joints
- Impaired blood flow to hand
- Long-term pain in hand (rare)