

Trigger finger - Option Grid



Your clinician has discussed a diagnosis of trigger finger. At Healthshare we encourage a shared decision making process involving you, the patient in the treatment most appropriate for your condition. The option grid below is based on current evidence.

Frequently Asked Questions	Splinting and Exercises	Local Steroid Injection	Surgery
What does this treatment involve?	Wearing a splint on your problem finger or thumb to limit movement. A splint may be worn for up to 6 weeks *1	A small amount of steroid is injected into your problem finger or thumb to reduce inflammation.	Surgery is done on the palm side of your wrist. Tissue is cut to reduce the trigger action. This is typically a day case procedure.
For whom does this treatment work best?	Splints work well in 30% of patients presenting with mild problems. *1	60% of patients feel better after injection. A further 20% feel better after a follow up injection. *2	Surgery is the most effective treatment in over 99% of patients. *3
What are the advantages of this treatment?	Least invasive, least expensive easy to apply and safe	Convenient, can be done in normal clinic appointment.	Surgery provides long term improvement for about 95% of patients *3
What are the disadvantages of this treatment?	Wearing a splint may limit function. Relief is often for a short period and does not work as well as other options in reducing pain and triggering. Diabetics are less likely to get relief.	Injections provide relief but the problem may come back. 40% of patients may benefit from a second injection. Insulin dependent diabetics respond poorly.	You may need to stop working for a few weeks. Recovery can be painful. Less than 1% fail to respond to surgery.
Are there any risks?	No	Less than 1% experience infection or tendon rupture after injection	As with any surgery patients may have nerve damage, infection, bruising and pain.
How long before I can use my hand again?	No delay	You can usually return to work the day of the injection.	You can use your hand for light activities usually after a couple of days *1
How soon do the symptoms come back after this treatment?	Short term relief by restricting movement	Depending on your severity you may be symptom free for up to 12 months or more.	Symptoms rarely come back but certain patient groups may be more susceptible.

References:

- 1 – Makkouk AH, et al (2008) Trigger finger: etiology, evaluation, and treatment. *Curr Rev Musculoskeletal Med* 1: 92-6
- 2 – Fleisch S B, Spindler K P, Lee D H. Corticosteroid injections in the treatment of trigger finger: a level I and II systematic review. *Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons* 2007; 15(3): 166-171
- 3 - Dierks U, Hoffmann R, Meek M F. Open versus percutaneous release of the A1-pulley for stenosing tendovaginitis: a prospective randomized trial. *Techniques in Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery* 2008; 12(3): 183-187