Trigger Finger

Your surgeon has suggested either a medical treatment or a small surgery to treat your trigger finger. To help you make the best choice, it's important to understand the risks, the treatment process, and what to expect afterward.

What is Trigger Finger?

Trigger finger happens when a finger tendon becomes swollen or thickened and gets stuck inside its sheath (a tunnel it normally slides through). This causes pain and a catching or locking feeling when you try to bend or straighten the finger — especially in the morning. Over time, the inflammation makes the problem worse.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

Typical signs include:

- Pain in the finger,
- Finger locking or clicking,
- In advanced cases, the finger may get stuck in a bent or straight position.

Any finger can be affected, including the thumb. Conditions like diabetes or rheumatic diseases can increase the risk of trigger finger. Usually, no special tests are needed. In early stages, an ultrasound may help.



Treatment Options

1. **Medical Treatment**:
   Cortisone injections can reduce inflammation and relieve symptoms. However, the problem can come back. Usually, only one or two injections are recommended.
2. **Surgical Treatment**:
   If injections don't work or the finger is badly stuck, surgery may be needed. This is done under local anesthesia and as a day case (you go home the same day).
   - The surgeon opens part of the tendon sheath to free the tendon.
   - Sometimes, if the inflammation is severe, a small amount of tissue is also removed.
   - Finger movement is encouraged from the same day.
   - Full recovery can take a few weeks or even months.

Possible Complications (rare)

Even though this surgery is simple, some issues may occur:

- Sensitivity or swelling at the scar.
- Small bruising (hematoma), usually goes away on its own.
- Finger stiffness, especially if it was stiff before surgery.
- Rare infection, treated with antibiotics.
- Temporary swelling that can be uncomfortable.
- Complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS): a painful reaction needing special care.

Before and After the Surgery

- The operation is done as a day procedure — you go home the same day.
- You'll need nurse care for about 15 days to take care of the wound.
- Hand therapy or exercises may be needed to improve movement.
- Time off work depends on your job and activity level.

This treatment, whether with injections or surgery, is usually very effective at reducing pain and helping your finger move normally again.