

DERMOFASCIECTOMY

You will have your Dupuytren's contracture corrected by removal of the abnormal fascia and the overlying involved or scarred skin. The palm skin will be replaced by a skin-graft that is taken from either the upper arm or groin.

Local anaesthetic will be injected around the site of operation and therefore this area and the nearby fingers will remain numb for up to ten hours after surgery. Hand elevation is important to prevent swelling and stiffness of the fingers. Please remember not to walk with your hand dangling, or to sit with your hand held in your lap.

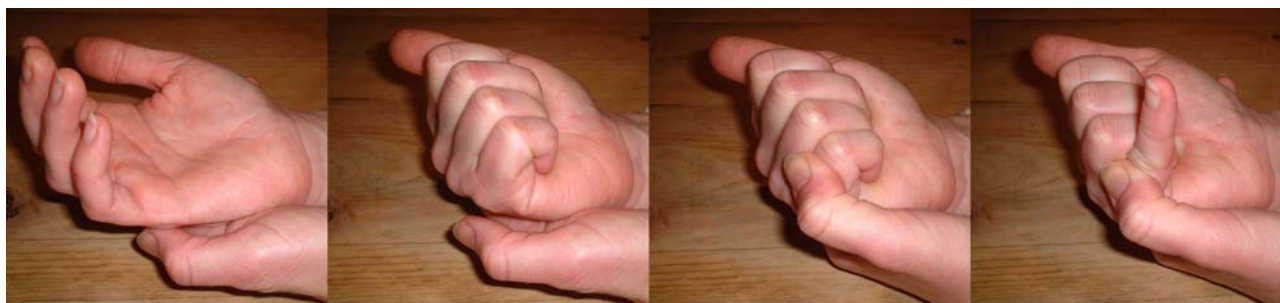


The hand will be initially be rested in a bulky dressing, consisting of gauze, wool, plaster and crepe bandage. You will have a small dressing where the graft was taken. This can be removed after three days. The hand dressing will be removed after 1-5 days. It will then usually be left open at this stage except for the skin graft, which is protected by a "tie-over" dressing of yellow wool.

At this time, you will see the Occupational Therapist who will fit you with a splint that will rest the skin-graft which at this stage does not like movement. You can use the rest of the hand for gentle activities.

The tie-over dressing will be removed after about 10-14 days to allow the graft to be checked and for the stitches to be removed. Initially, the graft is very bruised and flat. You will be allowed to remove the splint during the day. However, it needs to be worn at night and at times in the day if you feel the hand is vulnerable to knocks (out shopping, grand-children visiting, etc.).

If the graft looks satisfactory, gentle movements of the operated fingers will be started. The diagrams show the most effective way of recovering finger movements. By first bending the knuckle joint, finger extension can be achieved more efficiently and without stretching the scar.



The graft often remains rather delicate for another week. Some blistering is common that may weep during the exercises. Look out for any redness or tenderness in the area, which might indicate an infection. Do not apply antiseptic. Please contact my secretary if you have any worries.

As soon as all the dressings are removed, it is safe to get the hand wet in a bath or shower. The wound and the surrounding skin often become very dry and will be more comfortable if a moisturizer is applied, including the graft itself. It is worth covering the graft at night with a piece of simple gauze with some moisturiser applied. This can be taped to the splint and used to protect it from rubbing on bed-clothes.

After about three weeks, you can begin to get back to normal light activities. You can usually start driving after 4-5 weeks. A splint will need to be worn at night for twelve weeks to help keep the finger straight. Sometimes a further splint is provided for the day-time if the finger needs to be pulled straighter. Timing of your return to work is variable according to your occupation and you should discuss this.

The scars and graft will be pink and both somewhat firm to touch and tender for some months after the operation. This can be helped by massaging the area firmly with the moisturizing cream.