

FACT SHEET

WHAT IS TRIGGER FINGER?

Trigger finger refers to catching of a finger as it bends or straightens. The affected finger may lock in a bent position but with effort it can be straightened with a painful click.

This occurs because a swelling has developed on one of the tendons which bends the finger. Instead of gliding up and down smoothly, the swelling on the tendon gets stuck on a structure in the palm called a pulley, causing the finger to snag. The more frequently this occurs, the more thickened the pulley becomes, making the triggering progressively more painful.

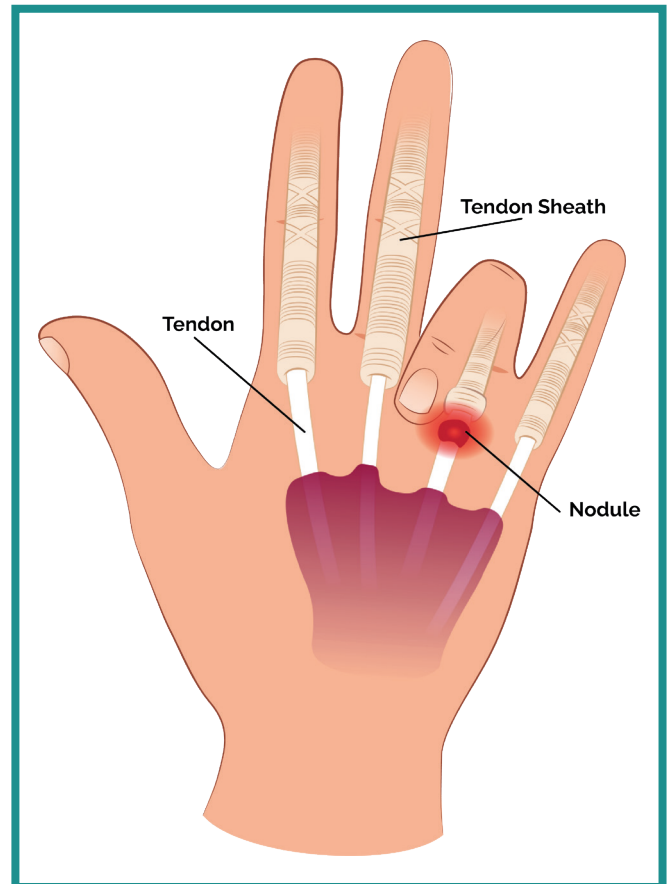
WHAT CAUSES TRIGGER FINGER?

Trigger finger is a very common condition, especially in older adults. Some metabolic disorders such as diabetes predispose people to trigger finger. Over-use can be a contributing factor but for many people there is no apparent cause.

HOW IS TRIGGER FINGER TREATED?

Hand therapy treatment consists of fitting a splint which prevents the nodule from sliding under the thickened pulley, allowing the swelling on the tendon to settle. The splint is usually worn day and night but is easily removed for handwashing.

Results of treatment with a splint are good for patients who have had triggering for less than 4 months. Those with more long-standing triggering may require ultra-sound guided injection into the tendon sheath. Results of cortisone injection may be improved by wearing a splint for 6 weeks following cortisone injection. If the triggering fails to respond to conservative treatment, surgery may be required to release the thickened pulley.



Trigger Finger



Trigger Finger Splint