

# FACTSHEET



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## Trigger Thumb

### What is Trigger Thumb?

A trigger thumb is a condition that occurs in babies and young children. The thumb develops into a bent shape and stays in that position. You may be able to feel a lump at the bottom of the thumb on the palm side. You may also notice a pop or a click when you straighten your child's thumb.

### What Causes Trigger Thumb?

The cause is not known. It is not present at birth.

### Is a Trigger Finger the Same as a Trigger Thumb?

Trigger thumb should not be confused with a trigger finger. A trigger finger is a rare condition that is generally present at birth and is often linked to other disorders. A child with a trigger finger should be referred to a plastic or Orthopaedic Surgeon with a special interest in paediatric hand surgery.

### Does a Trigger Thumb Require Treatment?

Trigger thumbs do not generally prevent children from using their hands. In 60% of cases, the thumb will become straight again.

Splints or taping your child's thumb will not help in most cases.

A photographic record of the progress of your child's trigger thumb may be helpful.

If your child still has a trigger thumb when they are 18 months old, or complains of pain, or is not using their

hand properly, your child may need a referral to see a Plastic or Orthopaedic Surgeon.

### Surgical Treatment

After the age of 18 months, surgical treatment may be recommended to straighten the thumb.

After the age of 4 years, a period of night splinting after surgery usually corrects the trigger thumb.

#### Remember:

- The majority of trigger thumbs will straighten without treatment.
- Splinting or taping is not recommended in most cases.
- A referral to a plastic or orthopaedic surgeon is recommended after 18 months of age.
- Progressive photographs of your child's thumb may be helpful.

Baek GH, Kim JH, Chung MS, Kang SB, Lee YH, Gong HS (2008) The natural history of pediatric trigger thumb. *The Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery* May;90(5):980-5.