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TRIGGER FINGER

Trigger finger is an inflammation of tissue inside your finger or thumb. It is also called tenosynovitis. Tendons (cordlike fibers that attach muscle to bone and allow you to bend the joints) become swollen. So does the synovium (a slick membrane that allows the tendons to move easily). This makes it difficult to straighten the finger or thumb.

Symptoms

The first sign of trigger finger may be pain where the finger or thumb joins the palm. You may also notice some swelling. As the tendon becomes more inflamed, the finger may start to catch when you try to straighten it. When the locked tendon releases, the finger jumps, as if you were releasing the trigger of a gun. This further irritates the tendon and may set up a cycle of catching and swelling. Your treatment will depend on how severe your condition is.



Treatment

If your symptoms are mild, you may be able to take oral anti-inflammatory medication or you may need an injection of cortisone, an anti-inflammatory, in the base of the affected finger.

If other treatments don't relieve your symptoms you may need surgery. The sheath that surrounds the tendon is opened to enlarge the space and release the swollen tendon. This allows the finger to bend and straighten normally again. Surgery takes about 20 minutes, and can often be done under a local anesthetic. You can go home the same day. Your hand will be wrapped in a soft bandage. The stitches will be removed in 10 to 14 days.



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