

Expectations for Trigger Finger Release Surgery



Dr. Andrew M.I. Bogle

What is Trigger Finger?

A trigger finger is a condition that affects the flexor tendons that bend your fingers. These tendons pass through a natural canal that holds the tendons in place as they pass from the palm into the finger. The canal holds the tendons close to the bones, similar to the function of the eyelets on a fishing rod that hold the line close to the rod. This condition occurs when the canal becomes tight from swelling of the tendons, thickening of the walls of the canal, or both.

Symptoms of trigger finger include pain, swelling, stiffness, and “triggering”, which is snapping or popping of the finger. Sometimes the finger can get stuck in a bent position similar to the position of a finger that has pulled trigger. Trigger fingers can occur in anyone but are more common in people with certain health conditions like diabetes or rheumatoid arthritis.

Please refer to www.handcare.org for more information about the etiology and symptoms of trigger finger.

What to expect on the day of surgery

This procedure is done on an outpatient basis, so you will go home the same day.

ANESTHESIA

Most patients receive light sedation with IV medication for the procedure. Local anesthetic is also injected at the time of surgery. Some patients prefer to have the procedure done with only local

anesthesia using a numbing injection prior to the procedure.

- If you elect to have sedation, you will need a driver to accompany you to the surgery center/hospital.
- Your hand and affected finger will remain numb for several hours, typically lasting into the evening.

What to expect during surgery

Surgical procedure: A small incision is made in the palm to expose part of the flexor canal. A small part of the canal (called the A1 pulley) is divided to release the pressure on the tendons. The surgery itself only takes a few minutes, but patients spend several hours at the surgery center/hospital for surgical preparation and post-operative recovery time.

What to Expect After Surgery

DRESSING AND WOUND CARE

- **First 3 days after surgery:** You will have a soft dressing on your hand. You may shower/bathe as long as the dressing remains dry.
- **After 3 days:** You may remove your dressing and shower normally with the incision uncovered. You should not scrub the incision. The incision may be left uncovered, or you may cover it with a Band-Aid or gauze. Please avoid submerging your hand in a pool or hot tub/jacuzzi until you return for your follow-up. If you wash dishes, please use rubber gloves while doing so.

- It is normal to have increased swelling in your fingers and hand after surgery.

SUTURES

The stitches will be removed in the office approximately 2 weeks from surgery.

ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS

Avoid lifting anything heavier than 2 pounds until you return to the office for follow-up.

MEDICATIONS

You will be given pain medication to help with any discomfort after the surgery. Sometimes, these medications can cause nausea or constipation. You will also be prescribed medications to help with these side effects. Some people find that over-the-counter pain relievers, like ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol), work well enough that the prescription medications are not necessary.

THERAPY

Most people do not need formal hand therapy after trigger finger release surgery. However, some patients do become stiffer for several weeks or even months after surgery.

If you have any questions, the most efficient way to contact us is via the messaging portal on MyChart. Dr. Bogle's team works on checking and answering these messages throughout the workday to get back with you as quickly as possible. **After hours and on weekends** (outside of 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday-Friday) please call 804-379-2414 to speak with the on-call provider.



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