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Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon and Surgery of the Hand

Dupuytren's Contracture Information Sheet

The operation involves an incision in the hand, along the diseased cord with some zig zag incisions along the creases. The diseased cords are removed aiming to keep the nerves and tendons intact. After bleeding is controlled, the incisions are closed. If the disease is severe or is a recurrent disease, the joint may need releasing or a skin graft is occasionally needed.

There are risks and complications associated with this operation

Skin incisions take time to heal. usual time is 2 weeks but can be longer. Skin incisions may not heal well and may need secondary skin grafts or procedures to address. The condition is usually painful for a few weeks.

Wound infection may need antibiotics to treat.

Nerve injury is rare with this condition. If a nerve injury occurs it is repaired where possible. Nerve injury and repair may leave the finger numb or with an altered sensation. It may cause the finger to be painful longer than the usual 2-6 weeks. Sometimes nerves are just bruised and usually takes 6 weeks to recover. If a nerve is cut and repaired, it may take several years to occur. The nerve recovery may not be complete.

Recurrence of Dupuytren's or joint contracture

Despite a successful operation, the condition may reoccur. This may occur in the operated finger or in other fingers. It signifies the patient has a severe disease and if this recurs, please contact the practice. If the joint contracture is severe, the operation may not be able to fix this. A general rule is that if a finger is contracted we can improve this by 50% but may not make back to normal.

Complex Sympathetic Nerve Pain

Very rarely with any hand injury, the nerves become hypersensitive and creates a painful situation that is difficult to treat. This is most uncommon but we always advise of this as it is a severe consequence of any hand operation. It needs time and medication to help heal.

Realistic expectations from surgery

It is important for your expectations to be realistic. We will try as far as possible, within the constraints of your physical health, the nature of the problem, and your wishes to help you achieve your goals. The surgeon cannot guarantee all expectations and nor can guarantee the long lasting effect as the ageing process continues and there may be other variations. Sometimes other procedures are required, and infrequently sometimes severe complications are encountered. We will endeavour to the best of our ability to help you where possible. Rarely, it may be required to seek the help of other specialists. If you however have any concerns at any time please feel free to contact the practice. You are always entitled to second opinions at any stage and we are happy to help facilitate this for you if you so desired.

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