

# De Quervains Tenosynovitis

## Information for patients

### Aim of this leaflet

This leaflet aims to provide information on the effects and treatment of De Quervains Tenosynovitis.

**Tenosynovitis** is the inflammation of a tendon and the surrounding sheath (basically its protective covering).

**DeQuervain's Tenosynovitis** affects the tendons of two specific muscles on the thumb side of the hand – the abductor pollicis longus and extensor pollicis brevis. These muscles are located in the forearm and their tendons travel across the wrist to produce movement of the thumb. The walls of the affected tendon sheaths (basically protective coverings for the tendons) become thickened and inflamed. Movement causes pain, which increases with continued use.





## Common signs and symptoms

- Pain on use of the thumb and wrist. The pain can radiate into the wrist / forearm and increases with twisting movements of the wrist or general movements of the thumb.
- Inflammation (redness and swelling) of the skin over the painful area (see diagram).
- Difficulty with opening door handles, turning keys, grasping objects, etc.

## Treatment of De Quervains Tenosynovitis

Your therapist will provide you with a splint which supports the thumb and the wrist. This splint prevents thumb movements, which cause pain and aims to reduce the swelling in the tendon sheath, by resting the tendons.

## When and for how long do I need to wear the splint?

You need to wear the splint at all times (including when sleeping) for 6-8 weeks or as advised by your therapist. You may only take it off for bathing, or to wash the splint, which should be done when you can rest your hand. (The splint can be washed in warm soapy water). This should allow the inflammation to settle down and so reduce the pain.

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