

Identifying Dupuytren's Contracture

Only about 5% of people experience Dupuytren's contracture.

1 Introduction

Dupuytren's contracture is a genetic disorder that causes the abnormal thickening of the fascia tissue in the palm of the hand and the base of the fingers. The thickened tissue forms small nodules in the hands, eventually developing into thick cords that cause the fingers to bend towards the palm. Dupuytren's contracture most often affects the ring and pinkie fingers and can limit the use of the hand in many people.

2 Causes

Though the exact cause of Dupuytren's contracture is unknown, most evidence suggests that genetics plays a significant role. This disorder is most prevalent in men of Northern European descent over the age of 40. Smoking, diabetes, alcohol and aging are also all related to Dupuytren's.

3 Symptoms

Dupuytren's is not usually painful and can take months or even years to fully develop. While the disorder progresses, some common symptoms may include not being able to lay the hand flat on a table and pits or groves around the contracted figure. Although additional symptoms are rare, some signs to watch out for in the affected hand are:

- Inflammation and swelling
- Tenderness
- Pain or burning
- Itching

4 Treatments

There is no cure for Dupuytren's contracture. Since this disorder progresses slowly and may not become troublesome for years, many patients do not need treatment. In the event that treatment is needed, some options include:

- Physical therapy
- Bracing or splinting to stretch the fingers
- Steroid injections
- Radiation therapy
- Needle aponeurotomy
- Fasciotomy

Did you know?

About 20% of patients with Dupuytren's contracture will experience a meaningful degree of contracture recurrence after surgery.

For more information on Dupuytren's contracture and supportive resources, please visit orthoinfo.aaos.org.

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dupuytren-s-contracture/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20371949>

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