

MONTHLY Check-Up

WHITE PLAINS HOSPITAL

FIVE FACTS :

Common Hand Problems

1

The Facts

Hand problems can be an issue for many people, from children to seniors. Common hand problems include: Carpal tunnel syndrome, sports injuries, fractures, Ganglion cysts (non-cancerous lumps in the hands/wrists), arthritis, trigger finger (a common form of tendonitis in the hands), and Dupuytren Disease (an abnormal thickening of the tissue beneath the skin that may cause fingers to become bent).

Many hand problems (Ganglion cysts, trigger fingers, and Dupuytren Disease) don't have a known cause. Carpal tunnel syndrome is rarely work-related; if it is, it's usually from motions that are both repetitive and forceful. Fractures can be caused by sports, as well as by falls and osteoporosis. The most common form of arthritis, osteoarthritis, often gradually worsens over time.

2

Causes

3

Diagnosis

A correct diagnosis is the key to properly treating hand, wrist, forearm, and elbow problems. A combination of tests, such as an x-ray or MRI, and examination by an orthopedist or hand surgeon is often necessary. A child who falls down could have a normal x-ray and still have a growth plate fracture, which is very common but often invisible on x-rays.

For most hand problems, non-surgical treatment is usually attempted before surgery. Trigger finger can often be treated successfully with cortisone injections. Surgical options exist for all of these common hand problems should conservative measures fail.

4

Treatment Options

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New Advances

A new drug, Xiaflex, uses a purified enzyme to weaken the tissue underlying Dupuytren Disease. Patients receive an injection and then return to the doctor's office the following day for a minor outpatient procedure with minimal recovery time. There are also new nerve tests to diagnose carpal tunnel syndrome, which should be treated as soon as possible to prevent nerve damage.



“I SEE SO MANY PROBLEMS WITH HANDS, ELBOWS, WRISTS AND ARMS. THE COMMON THREAD IS THAT IT OFTEN TAKES A HUMAN BRAIN TO PROPERLY DIAGNOSE AND MAKE SENSE OF THESE ISSUES; ONE TEST OFTEN CAN'T CORRECTLY DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM.”

PAUL FRAGNER, MD

Dr. Fragner is the Director of Hand Surgery for the Westchester Orthopedic Institute and Hand, Wrist and Elbow Surgeon at White Plains Hospital Physician Associates – Orthopedic Specialists. Dr. Fragner received his medical degree from SUNY Upstate Medical University College of Medicine and completed his Orthopedic Surgery residency at SUNY Downstate. He completed his Fellowship in Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He has served as a Clinical Instructor in Orthopedic Surgery and Rehabilitation at Yale University School of Medicine and as a medical consultant to the New York Rangers™ hockey team. Dr. Fragner is Chief Emeritus of the Division of Orthopedic Surgery at White Plains Hospital.