

De Quervain's Tendonitis

Anatomy

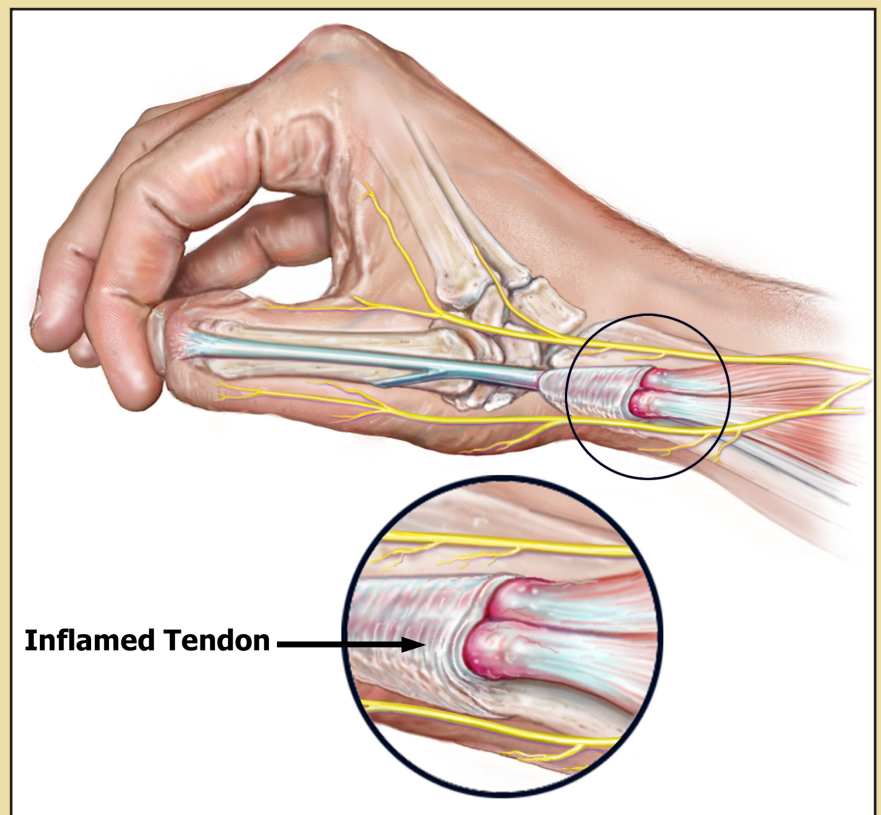
This condition is characterized by inflammation of some of the tendons that extend the thumb. These tendons pass through a sheath of tissue called the first extensor compartment. The narrow tunnel and the close proximity of the tendons can cause irritation. Once inflamed the pain-inflammation cycle can be difficult to overcome without directed treatment.

Inflammation can be caused by a number of things. Starting new activities in which there is significant repetitive motion of the thumb or wrist can cause irritation. Mothers of newborns and grandmothers have been identified as having an increased risk of developing de Quervain's because of the repetitive nature of picking up an infant. Fractures, various types of arthritis and a tight cast can also predispose you to developing tendonitis in this area.

Symptoms

There is a range of symptoms associated with this disorder. They include, but are not limited to:

- Pain at the base of thumb and/or wrist.
- Painful clicking and popping
- Swelling over the irritated area of the wrist
- Weakness with certain movements
- Burning pain or tingling over the tendons in this area.



Inflamed Tendon

CLINIC LOCATIONS

Columbia Heights
Eagan
Forest Lake
Downtown St. Paul
Hastings
Maplewood
Vadnais Heights
Woodbury - Allina
Woodwinds
Health Campus

CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Line
(651) 842-5200

Appointment Line
(651) 842-5201

Online at:
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Diagnosis

Diagnosing de Quervain's is predominately based upon your symptoms and physical examination. X-rays can be useful in revealing any abnormalities in the bony anatomy and may help confirm or eliminate a diagnosis. Your doctor may wish to inject a numbing medication into the painful area. This injection is diagnostic and can help your Hand Surgeon formulate a plan tailored to your needs.

Treatments

The non-surgical treatment for this disorder is centered on breaking the pain-inflammation cycle. This can occur a number of ways.

- **Cortisone Injection:** Your doctor may wish to inject cortisone into the area of the tendons to decrease the inflammation.
- **Bracing:** The proper brace can immobilize the irritated tendons, prevent further irritation, and result in a decrease in inflammation of the tendon.
- **Oral Anti-Inflammatories:** These may be effective at reducing the amount of inflammation in the tendon.
- **Activity Modification:** If a specific activity is making your wrist worse, stop doing it.
- **Physical Therapy:** A therapist can work with you to strengthen your hand and calm the irritated tendons. This can be accomplished through the use of modalities like ultrasound and directed exercises.

If you fail to improve after non-surgical care, your doctor may wish to intervene surgically. In this procedure your Hand Surgeon will release the sheath that is irritating the tendons. Your surgeon can discuss the details of the surgery with you should it become necessary.

NOTES:
