

Base of Thumb Arthritis - Suspensionplasty

INDICATIONS

- Gold standard.
- Mid to late stage arthritis of the CMC (base of thumb) joint including with instability and joint subluxation.
- Aim is to remove the joint surface and stop the arthritic joints rubbing together.
- Long-term benefit.

INVESTIGATIONS

- Plain x-rays are usually all that is required.

SURGERY

- Usually overnight stay procedure, most commonly under general anaesthetic +/- a block.
- Via an incision at the base of the thumb, sometimes with a second incision in the mid forearm.
- The bone is stabilised by a combination of tendon and sutures.
- Usually takes approximately 60 minutes.

POST OPERATIVELY

- Immediately post operatively the hand is usually quite numb due to local anaesthetic used for the surgery.
- The thumb and wrist will be in a plaster backslab and the fingers will be free.
- It is important to keep the hand elevated after surgery especially in the first 72 hours post op to reduce/limit swelling.
- Keep the fingers moving, all the way straight and bent into a fist to limit stiffness and help reduce swelling.
- May use the hand for light activities as comfortable but avoid heavy activities.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry.
- Review at 2 weeks for wound check and to change to removable plastic splint.
- Begin Scar massage to soften wounds and desensitise scars.
- Takes 6-12 months to fully recover.

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(Bone has been removed and ligaments stabilised, note space at base of thumb)



(Incision)



(Severe Arthritis of Base of thumb and STT joint)