

PROVIDING SPECIALISED TREATMENT FOR

- IMPINGEMENT
- ROTATOR CUFF DISEASE
- INSTABILITY
- FROZEN SHOULDER
- OSTEOARTHRITIS
- POSTURAL DYSFUNCTION
- DISLOCATIONS
- FRACTURES
- CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME
- DE QUERVAIN'S TENOSYNOVITIS
- MALLET FINGER
- TENDON INJURIES
- OVERUSE INJURIES
- PLUS GENERAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

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**HUNTER
HAND &
UPPER LIMB
THERAPY**

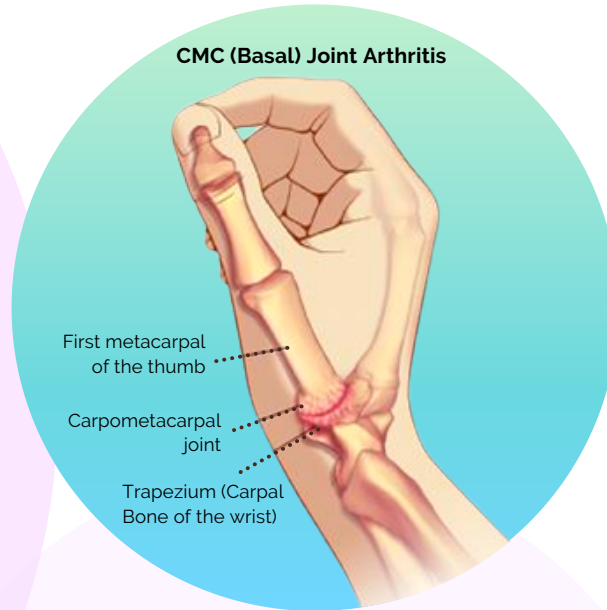
THUMB OSTEOARTHRITIS

Information Brochure

WHAT IS OSTEOARTHRITIS?

Osteoarthritis occurs when the smooth cartilage that covers the ends of the bones begins to wear out. It may be caused by wear and tear from normal use of the hand. Previous injuries to the joint may increase the chances of developing this type of arthritis.

In the hand, osteoarthritis often affects the joint at the base of the thumb and the small joints of the fingers. The joint at the base of the thumb allows for swivel and pivoting motions and is subject to an unusual amount of stress as you grip things in your hand.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- The first symptom is pain with activities that involve gripping or pinching an object. This may include activities such as opening jars, holding cutlery, manipulating small objects and turning taps, door handles and keys. As the arthritis worsens, less activity is needed to produce pain.
- Swelling and tenderness at the base of the thumb.
- Loss of strength in gripping and pinching activities.
- The joint begins to look bigger and "out of joint".
- Movement of the thumb becomes limited.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS?

A therapist can provide advice on how to live with arthritis and help identify activities which could aggravate the problem. This is referred to as joint protection techniques. There are also special tools or aids available to help people with arthritis perform routine daily activities.

A supportive splint, worn during the day (and sometimes at night if needed) may help to support or rest the joint.

Treatments may also be used to settle the pain and swelling. An exercise program to ensure your hand does not become stiff or weak is sometimes helpful. Your therapist can advise you on these.

