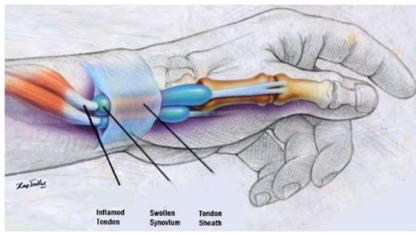


# De Quervain's tendinosis

## Self-care Guide

### Introduction

De Quervain's tendinosis (DQV) occurs when the tendons around the base of the thumb are irritated or constricted due to overuse of thumb causing swelling of tendon or thickening of tendon sheath. It causes pain or catching sensation during movement of thumb and wrist.



### Cause

DQV is most common in middle-aged women. Holding baby with excessive thumb abduction or out stretch wrist may increase the risk of developing the disease. Hormone change during pregnancy will affect the laxity of the joint and ligament which increase the risk of stretch injury. Overuse of thumb and wrist during household tasks such as washing clothes & twisting towels or prolonged use of smartphone or tablet with repeated forceful thumb pressing or gripping are also in high risk.

### Symptom

Pain and swelling may be felt over the thumb side of the wrist and the pain can travel up the forearm. This is noticeable when forcefully grasping object or twisting the wrist. In case of adhesion of tendon, thumb and wrist movement may be restricted. Decrease in gripping force with thumb weakness and even numbness of thumb and index fingers are also common.

### Self-Care Advice

#### Acute stage (Active Inflammation)

- **Ice therapy:** Resting pain, warm and swelling of the thumb and wrist are common at the acute stage. Rest and avoid thumb and wrist movement, use of ice pad to cover the involved area (3 times

per day, lasting 15 min each time) can help to relieve the symptoms.

- **Use of protective splint:** Appropriate protective splint can keep the wrist and thumb in a relaxed position to avoid excessive stretch to tendon sheath during movement in order to prevent further irritation to the tendon.



#### Chronic stage:

As the active inflammation subsided, home care program can be started according the therapist's instruction:

1. Warm water bath  
Immersed the hand into a warm water bath (Water temperature  $<45^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) for 15 min in the morning and at night can help to improve the circulation and soften the tight thumb muscle tendon
2. Fingers exercise program (3 times per day)
  - **Thumb stretching exercise**
    - Move the thumb to the little fingers in opposition to stretch the thumb for 10 sec. Repeat 10 times.
    - Grasp the thumb by the other 4 fingers of the same hand, move the wrist downward toward the 5th finger direction for 10 sec and repeat 10 times.
  - **Thumb strengthening exercise**
    - Put a circle of rubber band at the distal end of the fingers. Open the hand to resist the rubber band forcefully for 10 sec and repeat 10 times

