

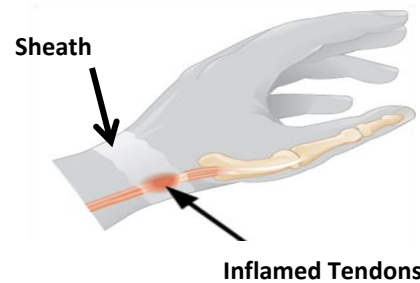
“Mum’s Thumb”

De Quervain’s Tenosynovitis in New Mothers

What is it?

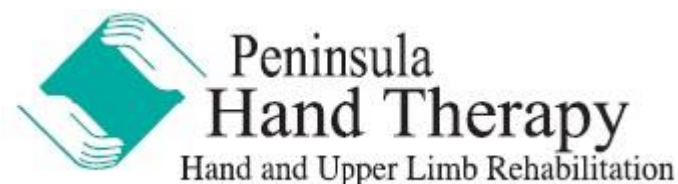
De Quervain’s Tendonitis causes pain and swelling in the thumb and wrist. It is a common hand condition caused by swelling of the two tendons that lift the thumb up and away from the hand.

De Quervain’s can be caused by a number of factors, most predominantly from overuse or frequent manual handling. For this reason, new mothers who are often picking up their newborn babies are at the greatest risk of developing this condition.



Signs & Symptoms

- Sharp shooting pains radiating from the thumb to the wrist
- Swelling and heat in the wrist
- Weakness in the wrist & thumb, particularly gripping, twisting or pinching actions
- Catching or snapping sensation when moving the thumb



For more management of this condition, please contact us.
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Prevention Strategies



Lifting
 Do not lift your baby from under their armpits using the web space between your thumb and index finger.



Instead, pick up your child by placing your hands together on either side of their rib cage and gently squeeze the child to lift them.



Feeding
 Avoid placing your baby’s head in the gap between the thumb and index finger and bending the wrist.



Keep your fingers and thumb together and hold the wrist in neutral position to cradle or feed your baby.



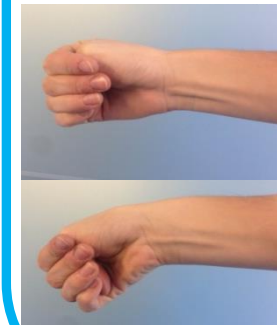
Bathing
 Avoid bending your wrist and stretching out your thumb and index finger to support your baby’s head.



Use a bath aid & support your baby’s head with the fingers and thumb together, and your wrist in a neutral position.

Diagnosis

There are various ways to diagnose De Quervain’s, including palpation over the inflamed tendon or diagnostic ultrasound. However the most common clinical test administered is the Finkelstein’s test.



Finkelstein’s Test

This test is conducted by bending the thumb into the palm and making a closed fist around the thumb. The wrist is then bent down towards the little finger. A person with De Quervain’s will typically find this manoeuvre very painful.

Treatment

Inflammatory conditions typically respond to the treatment of rest, ice, compression and elevation. However, this may not be adequate for complete recovery.

A custom thermoplastic brace provided by a hand therapist is a crucial factor in effective long term treatment of this condition as it immobilizes the base and middle joints of the thumb, whilst still allowing pinching and gripping to occur. This provides rest to the inflamed tendons whilst still allowing you to feed your baby.

- Activity modification: It is important not to ignore your pain. A custom splint will allow you complete activities without pain.
- Cortisone injection: This can be offered if therapy fails to give relief.

