

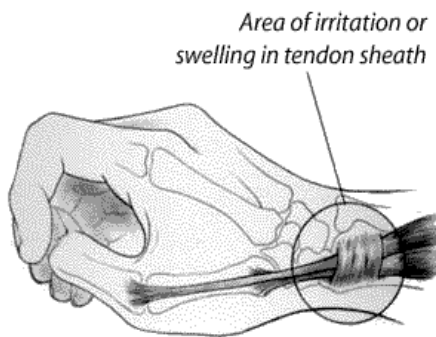


# Mommy Thumb

## De Quervain's Tenosynovitis

### What is De Quervain's Tenosynovitis?

De Quervain's Tenosynovitis is a painful condition causing inflammation of the thumb tendons where the base of the thumb meets the wrist.



### What causes it?

Improper lifting of infants can cause DeQuervains tenosynovitis (Mommy Thumb.) The pain is generally worse with overuse, repetitive or unaccustomed movements such as forcefully grasping objects, bending or twisting the wrist or when opening your thumb wide to pick up your infant. The repetitive motion of placing the thumb and index finger in the shape of an "L" to lift young children or cradling their head causes the pain and inflammation. The heavier the child is, the greater the pressure and irritation on the tendon.

### What can I expect?

Your thumb will feel much better after a period of rest. The problem may be painful again if you resume activities that irritate the tendon.

### What should I do?

- Various nursing positions can strain your wrist. Be sure to use some type of support such as a pillow to support your child's head so that your child's head is not resting in your hand.
- Ice your wrist 10-15 minutes, 3-5 times per day. Place a thin towel between your skin and the ice pack.
- Be sure to take any medication prescribed by your doctor.
- Modify your activities to be pain free. Do not continue to stress the tendon. (Avoid wringing out wash cloths.)
- Limit smart phone use of texting, sliding, scrolling and typing.
- Use a thumb spica splint.

A thumb spica splint can help reduce swelling and pain by keeping your wrist and thumb in a non-stressful position. Wear it only during painful activities. Keep using the splint as long as symptoms persist, up to a maximum of 6 weeks. Patients generally improve with wearing the splint consistently for 2-3 weeks especially when wearing overnight. Immobilization is needed to ease the stress on the tendon for healing even though it makes everyday tasks more difficult.

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### Lifting Techniques

Avoid Mommy Thumb by changing the way you lift your child.

#### PROBLEM CAUSING TECHNIQUE



#### BETTER LIFTING TECHNIQUE



Try scooping up your child by keeping your thumb in close to your palm and cradle under the head and bottom. Keep the palms of your hands up and wrists straight. If your child has good head control, you can place your hands with your thumbs in close to your palm on both sides of your child's rib cage and gently squeeze to lift your child.

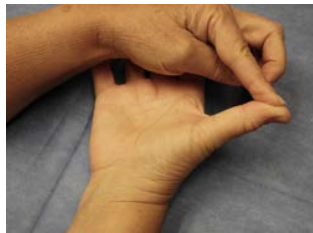
### What are some exercises that will help?

**PASSIVE WRIST FLEXION AND EXTENSION:** With your good hand, lift your painful hand up and down in a pain free range. Repeat 10 times, 3-4 times per day.



**THUMB PASSIVE RANGE OF MOTION:** Use your good hand to move your painful thumb in a pain free range. Repeat 10 times, 3-4 times per day.

Bend and straighten tip of painful thumb



Bend and straighten base of painful thumb



Consult with your physical or occupational therapist or doctor if you experience an increase in your symptoms with recommended exercises, or if you develop new symptoms of numbness, tingling, or a spread of the pain. This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor.