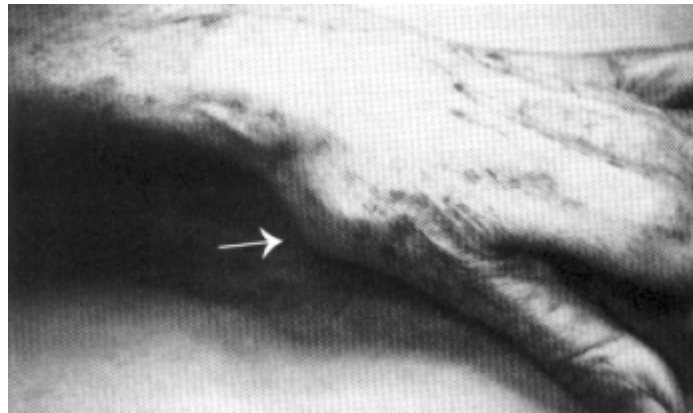


Arthritis of the Thumb

Symptoms of arthritis of the thumb are pain and swelling at the base of the thumb and wrist, particularly with grasp and pinch. Patient may complain of difficulty with opening a jar or using the door knob. These symptoms may appear the first thing in the morning then subside throughout day, only to return with a "dull aching" pain towards the end of the day or after vigorous use. In severe cases, the thumb may become stiff.



A painful "bump" may appear, due to swelling at the joint and abnormal growth of bone spurs. The joint is held in position by the contours of its surface and by the tissues surrounding the joint. Wear and tear of the joint surface or the supporting ligaments can lead to slipping of the joint, as well as pain and swelling.

Treatments for Arthritis of the Thumb

For mild-to-moderate symptoms of pain and swelling, treatment consists primarily of anti-inflammatory medication, rest, splinting, and injections.

For more severe symptoms, surgery may be considered. Surgery generally falls into two main types; one involves a fusion of the two bones making up the joint, thereby eliminating the joint and painful symptoms. The other involves removal of the arthritic surfaces and insertion of natural tendon or tissues from the patient to fit the space.