

About Surgery of the Hand



Overview

Your hand is a complex and unique part of your body, composed of delicate tissues and an intricate network of bones, muscles, vessels, and nerves. The ability to generate great force for activities like rock climbing while also providing the fine dexterity to play a musical instrument make the hand an amazing balance of power and finesse. Hand problems can affect anyone young or old, and can significantly impact a patient's function and quality of life. Hand surgeons are physicians who specialize in the treatment of these problems.

Hand Surgeons

Hand surgeons are experts in the diagnosis and treatment of problems of the hand, wrist, and forearm. Hand surgery is a subspecialty of orthopedics, plastics, and general surgery requiring an additional year or more of training after completing five years of surgical residency. A qualified hand surgeon is an expert in the complexities of hand anatomy and microvascular surgery, which enables the surgeon to operate on the small bones and delicate nerves, vessels, and other structures in the hand, wrist, and forearm. Some hand surgeons have also received additional training to care for problems of the elbow and shoulder. These surgeons are called Hand & Upper Extremity Surgeons. In some cases, a hand surgeon may specialize in specific areas, such as treating only children or certain problems such as tumors.

Treatment Options

Although you may be referred to see a hand surgeon by your doctor or the emergency department, that does not necessarily mean you need surgery. Many conditions are primarily treated nonsurgically with medications, injections, splints, or therapy. Your hand surgeon will diagnose your problem and then recommend the best course of treatment. Common problems treated by a hand surgeon include carpal tunnel syndrome and hand numbness, finger lacerations with tendon or nerve injury, hand and wrist arthritis, and hand fractures.

Seeking Treatment

If you have an injury or problem with your hand, wrist, or forearm that is causing pain or is affecting your hand, you may want to seek the treatment of a hand surgeon.