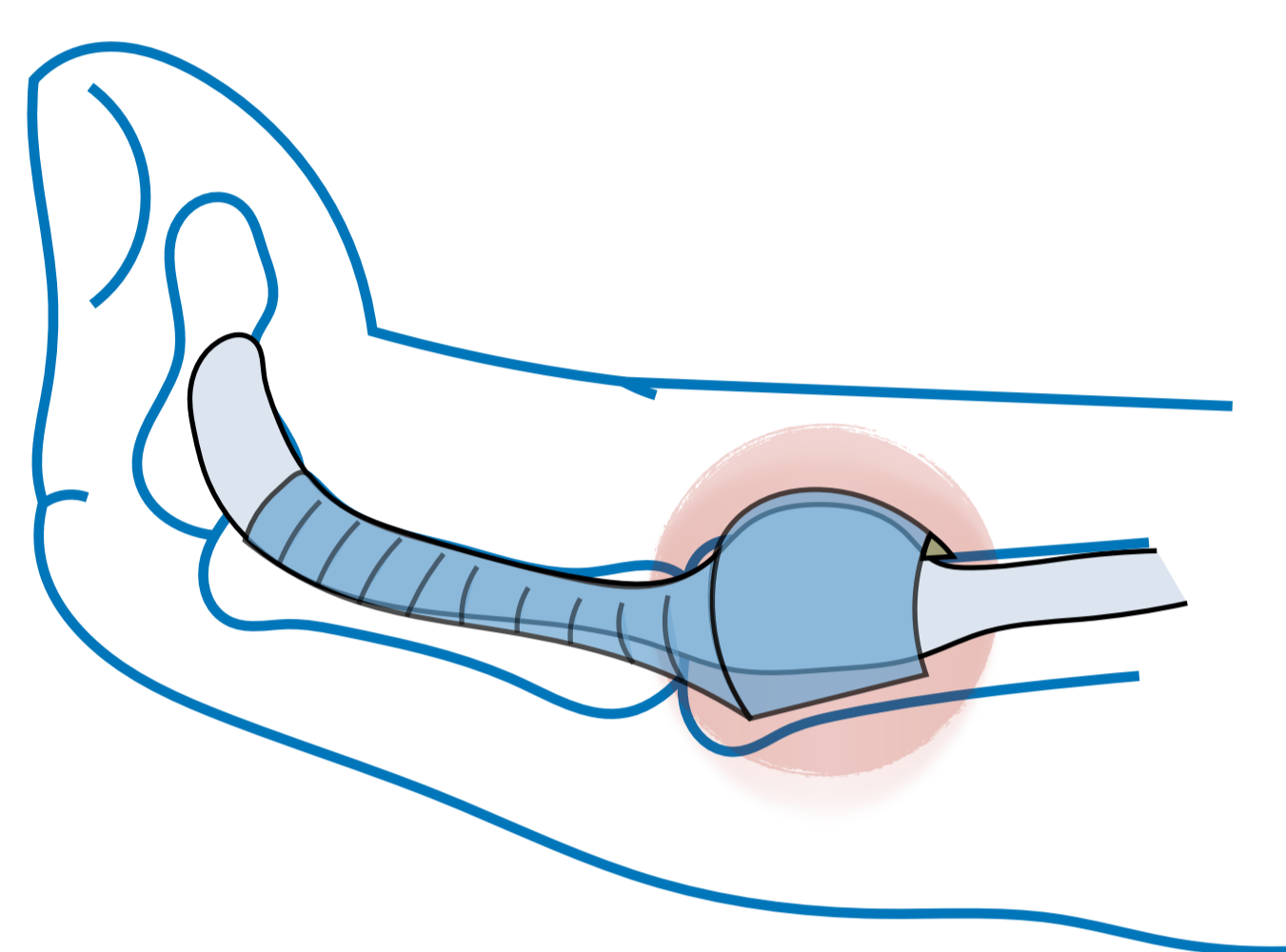




# Trigger Thumb in Children

**Trigger thumb** is a condition in young children where the thumb becomes locked in a bent position and cannot easily straighten. It typically affects children between 1 and 5 years of age and is **not usually present at birth**.

The cause is not completely understood, but it may be due to a mismatch in size between the **flexor tendon of the thumb** and the **sheath surrounding it**. This mismatch can cause the tendon to **catch or get stuck**, limiting smooth thumb movement.



## How Does It Present?

Your child may:

- Hold the thumb in a bent (flexed) position at the tip (interphalangeal joint).
- Be unable to give a “thumbs up.”
- Have a small bump at the base of the thumb on the palm side (called **Notta’s nodule**).
- Occasionally be able to straighten the thumb with a “clicking” sound.
- Rarely complain of pain, but some discomfort may occur when trying to extend the thumb.

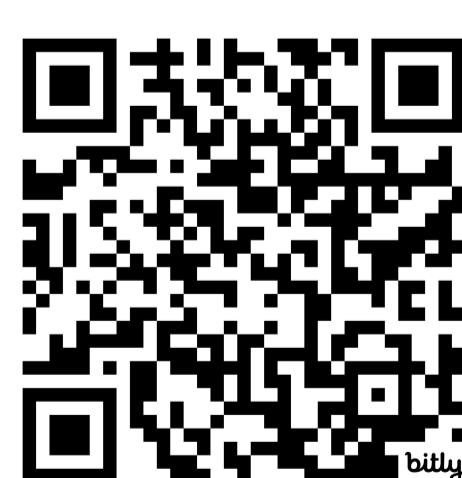
About **25% of cases are bilateral**, though not always at the same time.

## Consult your doctor if your child...

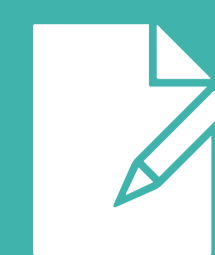


- ▶ Complains of pain or avoids using their hand
- ▶ The trigger thumb persists beyond age 2.
- ▶ Other fingers (not just the thumb) are catching, locking, or stiff.

More sheets are available at [www.epos.org/parent-info](http://www.epos.org/parent-info). This sheet may also be available in other languages.



## Additional information



- ▶ Trigger thumb is **different** from trigger finger in children and adults.
- ▶ Diagnosis is clinical, based on the child’s history and physical examination. No imaging is needed.
- ▶ Steroid injections are not recommended in children.

## How Is It Treated?

### Observation

- In children under 2 years of age, the condition may **resolve on its own**.

### Conservative treatment

- **Passive stretching exercises** at home.
- A **thumb splint/orthosis** may be tried, but compliance is often difficult.

### Surgical treatment

- Considered if the deformity persists **after age 2–3**, is **fixed**, or does not improve after **6 months** of observation.
- A **short day surgery** under general anesthesia.
- The **sheath around the tendon** is released through a small incision at the base of the thumb.
- Surgery allows **immediate correction** and restores normal thumb movement.
- No physiotherapy is needed after surgery.

