

## **Congenital Hand Service**

### **Extra digit removal under local anaesthetic**

#### **Information for parents and carers**

#### **Introduction**

Your child's Consultant/Specialist Nurse has advised you that your child needs to have removal of accessory fingers. This fact sheet aims to support the discussion you had with the clinician and to enable you to make an informed decision.

#### **What are accessory fingers?**

Your child has been born with extra fingers or parts of fingers that are not attached or working properly.

#### **What are the benefits of my child having the extra fingers removed?**

The extra fingers or parts are not needed and can be pulled or become twisted and painful for your child.

#### **What are the risks of my child having removal of accessory fingers?**

There is a small risk of bleeding, infection and reaction to local anaesthetic.

#### **Will this operation hurt my child?**

The use of numbing cream (topical anaesthetic) and injected (local anaesthetic) is used to reduce any pain for your child.

#### **Are there any alternatives to this procedure, or what will happen if I decide my child will not have the fingers/parts removed?**

The extra fingers/parts may be left but can become twisted and painful for your child.

#### **What sort of anaesthetic will my child be given?**

Your child will be given a local anaesthetic. Local anaesthesia is drug-induced numbness: it may be provided by an anaesthetist, surgeon or other healthcare professional, depending on the technique used. Like all medicines, local anaesthetics may sometimes cause side effects, as well as the effects that are needed. Your child may experience a sensation of "pins and needles", or muscle weakness in the numbed area.

Serious side effects are rare, and include seizures (fits), low blood pressure, slowed breathing and changes in heartbeat, which may be life-threatening. There is also the very rare possibility of nerve damage by the injection which could cause permanent numbness or weakness. If you have any concerns about any of these effects, you should discuss them with your child's doctor.

You will have the opportunity to discuss anaesthetic options and risks before your child's surgery with an anaesthetist.

#### **What will happen after my child has had their operation?**

After their operation your child will be taken to a recovery room and will be cared for by a trained recovery practitioner. They will carry out observations on your child's condition, including their consciousness, operation wound, comfort level and occurrence of nausea. Your child will remain under the care of the recovery practitioner with support from the anaesthetist and surgeon, for as

long as your child is in the recovery room. Any care that is required will be given, and when all observations are satisfactory, your child will be transferred to their ward.

Some operations require a very short time in recovery e.g. five minutes, and others will spend longer, sometimes as much as one hour. If your child's stay in the recovery room is going to be for some time, you can go there to keep them company and provide comfort.

### **How long will my child be in hospital?**

The operation is booked as a day case. Your child may be admitted either for a morning or an afternoon, and stay for a couple of hours.

### **Discharge information**

Your child will have a small dressing to each area where something has been removed. This dressing needs to be kept clean and dry for the next five days.

### **Is there anything we need to look out for once we return home?**

Any bleeding of the wounds or any signs of infection such as smell, leakage or redness. If any of this occurs – please ring for advice or seek help locally.

The wounds will have small dissolving stitches, which are made to remain in the wound for two to three - weeks. These stitches may open and if this happens please contact Burns Unit for advice.

### **Caring for your child's wound**

If the dressings become wet or fall off, dry the area and cover over the area with a small dry dressing or plaster, then ring for further advice.

### **Further appointment information**

You will receive a dressing clinic appointment for fifteen days' time in Specialist Dressing Clinic. If you feel your child does not require this appointment and your child's wounds are healed, you may cancel this appointment if you wish, and no further follow up will be required.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Any advice or help can be obtained from  
Plastic Surgery Specialist Nurse – Maria Kelly 0151-252-5386 or Burns Unit -0151-252-5400.  
Email: [Hand.Surgery@alderhey.nhs.uk](mailto:Hand.Surgery@alderhey.nhs.uk)

Reach: Association for Children with Upper Limb Deficiency [www.reach.org.uk](http://www.reach.org.uk)

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested. Please note: Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust is neither liable for the contents of any external internet site listed, nor does it endorse any commercial product or service mentioned or advised on any of the sites

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