

FAST FACTS: Hand Pain

The hand consists of bones, muscles, and ligaments (the connective tissues which attach bone to bone). There are 27 small bones in the hand: 14 bones in the fingers (also called phalanges), 5 bones in the middle of the hand (called metacarpals) and 8 bones in the wrist (carpal bones). These bones along with the muscles and ligaments are what allow movement and dexterity in our hands. There are many issues that cause problems and pain in the hands. This Fast Fact details many of the common issues.

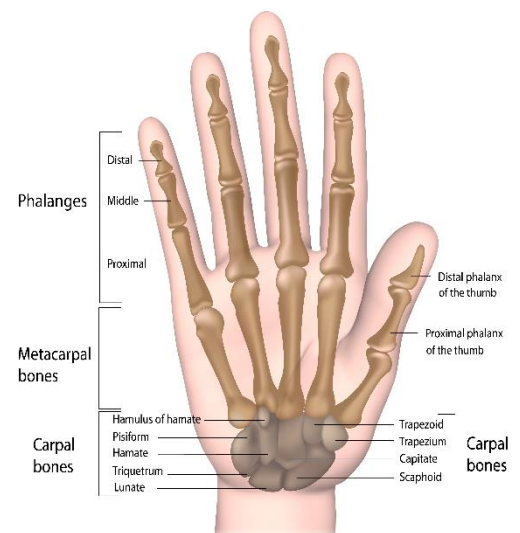
✓ Possible Causes of Hand Pain

- *Arthritis*- joint inflammation which can occur in several locations on the hand and be very painful. See [Fast Fact: Hand Arthritis](#) for specific details.
- *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome*- condition which causes a nerve in hand to be compressed as it passes through the wrist and may result in pain, numbness, tingling or “pins and needles” feeling in the fingers, etc. See [Fast Fact: Carpal Tunnel](#) for specific details.
- *Peripheral neuropathy*- happens when peripheral nerves (those nerves located at the edge of a location) are damaged. This condition causes pain, weakness, and numbness generally in the hands and feet. It cannot be cured but there are numerous things you can do to prevent it from worsening. See [Fast Fact: Peripheral Neuropathy](#).
- *Trigger Finger*- causes a finger to become stuck in a bent position. This condition is most common in woman. Individuals with diabetes or rheumatoid arthritis are at greater risk for developing. See [Fast Fact: Trigger Finger](#) for specific details.
- *De Quervain's tenosynovitis*- causes pain in the wrist on the side of the thumb. Pain is due to inflammation of tendons at the base of the thumb. Treatment may include rest and splinting of area, anti-inflammatory medications, and possible cortisone injections.
- *Fracture*- A broken bone can cause significant hand pain. Fractures generally also cause swelling and restricted movement in areas of fracture. Your family member's healthcare provider will generally order an X-ray to determine the existence of a fracture and the type of fracture. Treatment depends on the type of fracture.
- *Ganglion cysts*- are soft, fluid-filled pockets of tissue which usually appear around tendons or joints, generally in the hands, wrists, ankles, or feet. These cysts are common and generally harmless, but they can cause pain, numbness, tingling, or loss of mobility. Can be caused by injury or overuse but often the cause is unknown. Treatment may include avoiding repetitive movements, wearing a brace to immobilize the affected area, or draining the fluid from the cyst.

✓ Treatment

- Varies based on condition. Treatments may range from non-drug therapies to medication and/or surgery depending on the condition.
- Contact your family member's healthcare provider for a diagnosis and treatment plan.

Bones of human hand and wrist



✓ **What Else You Should Do**

- Write down and share information about your family member's pain prior to and following any treatment with their primary healthcare team.
- Use a [Pain Diary](#) to note important information useful to your family member's healthcare providers.

Revised November 2023

Resources

Healthline (2023). What's Causing My Hand Pain? <https://www.healthline.com/health/hand-pain#ganglion-cysts>.

Johns Hopkins Medicine (2023). *Hand Pain and Problems*. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/hand-pain-and-problems>.

WedMD (2022) *Why Does My Hand Hurt?* <https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/hand-pain-causes>.