

MIKE FOSTER
Hand Wrist and Elbow Surgeon
EPL Tendon Transfer

Problem

- The tendon that extends the IP joint of the thumb has ruptured.

Cause

- Usually there is an attrition rupture, at Lister's Tubercle on the back of the wrist, which is often secondary to minor wrist injury or fracture.

Diagnosis

- Inability to lift or extend the thumb off the flat of the table.
- No active IP joint extension
- Ultrasound or MRI scan can help confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment

- Surgical reconstruction is required under a general anaesthetic.
- A spare tendon to the index finger is utilised and transferred across and weaved into the thumb to allow independent extension of the thumb.

Potential Complications

- Infection, haematoma, neurovascular injury
- Failure of the tendon repair
- A stiffness to the thumb joints

Post Op Care

- The patient will awake from surgery in a cast, holding the thumb out straight.
- Seen at 10 days for removal of sutures and to go into a thermoplastic splint and commence hand therapy for six to eight weeks
- Specialist review at 10 days, six weeks and three months