

Date: 04/01/2019

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST - Ref: FOI/014400 – Base of thumb arthritis

**Question 1:** Please could you send us your current policies for treatment (surgical and/or injection) of base of thumb arthritis including any funding criteria

There is no specific policy as such but the treatment is fundamentally based on the principles of clinical assessment, an assessment of the functional impairment and in conjunction with radiological changes of arthritis.

This is initially managed with conservative measures, patient education and information, occupational therapy (joint protection, splinting) analgesia, topical NSAID creams.

If the arthritis is severe and does not respond to the simple measures, then the next stage is injections of steroid under x ray guidance in theatres (x rays are used to improve accuracy of placement of targeted injections, and sometimes to localise the origin of pain which helps later in surgical planning).

If there is failure to improve after injections, then surgery is offered, after informed consent.  
There are no specific funding criteria at present.

**Question 2:** Please could you send us any older policies including funding criteria for treatment of base of thumb arthritis from 1998 to present day -  
Please see response above

**Question 3:** If not included in the policy what criteria is used to categorise severity of base of thumb arthritis into mild moderate or severe.

The radiological grading is based on Eaton's classification. However this is known to have poor co-relation with symptoms therefore overall treatment is based on the clinical assessment as well as the radiological severity as above.