

## **CMC Arthroplasty**



**CMC Joint Arthritis**

### **1. What is the CMC joint?**

The carpometacarpal joint sits at the base of your thumb, seen in the figure above. It is between the trapezium bone of the wrist and the first metacarpal bone. The lateral, anterior (palmar), and posterior (dorsal) ligaments hold it in place. Being a stellar (saddle) joint, the carpometacarpal joint has a wide range of motion and function.

### **2. How did I get arthritis?**

When the carpometacarpal joint begins to deteriorate, it exposes the bony surface of the trapezium bone and the metacarpal bone. Without the smooth, protective joint the bone begin to rub on each other, resulting in trapeziometacarpal osteoarthritis. The wearing away of the joint will cause increasing arthritic pain at the base of your thumb.

### **3. What are the symptoms of arthritis?**

If you have arthritis, you will experience pain with hand labor such as writing, opening containers, or lifting heavy objects between your thumb and fingers. Some patients feel a stiffness or difficulty moving their thumb in the mornings. The pain will be felt in the base of your thumb. Most cases of thumb arthritis are seen in patients ages 60-70, but it can be found in people as young as 20.

#### **4. How will Dr.Bents know I have arthritis?**

Through a physical assessment and an x-ray, Dr.Bents will usually be able to determine the source of your pain. If you do have arthritis, your x-ray results will show an absence of space between your trapezium bone and the first metacarpal bone. The physical examination may reveal a bump at the base of the thumb and/or tenderness to the touch.

#### **5. Are there any non-surgical treatment options?**

Rest or modifications to the usage of your thumb (like adjusting your grip on a coffee mug or using two hands instead of one) will decrease the amount of stress on your joint. NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) like aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, meloxicam; Celebrex, diclofenac, etc. will reduce the inflammation in your thumb, providing some pain relief. A corticosteroid (cortisone) injection may decrease swelling/inflammation, but could give only temporary relief. Wearing a thumb splint at night or while doing activities that aggravate your thumb is another way to rest the joint and reduce the inflammation.

#### **6. What do I do if the non-surgical treatments don't work?**

If you aren't feeling relief from medications, splints, activity modifications, or injections, you may need to consider surgery. Even though surgery recovery is a slow process and there are potential complications, most patients who undergo a CMC arthroplasty will have decreased pain and improved function. There is no guarantee of complete pain relief, but in most cases, the pain much less pain than before surgery.