

## Chris' experience with collagenase injection

I am a woman, aged 54. My father had Dupuytren's Contracture. I first noticed cords in my mid 40s. The local doctor told me that surgery was my only option, but it wasn't bad enough (at that time) to do anything. I have had no previous surgeries or medical procedures for anything. My contracture was mainly in the little finger on my right hand. I had nodules and some cords in my palm. My left hand has the beginnings of DC.

After much research, I decided to go to UCLA Medical Center to be evaluated. I saw Dr. Prosper Benhaim, who is well recognized for his experience in hand issues. He confirmed my belief that Xiaflex would be the best treatment for my hand.

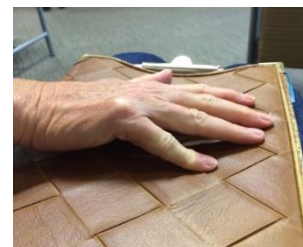
I had Xiaflex injected and my right hand manipulated for Dupuytren's Contracture. I had the injections one day and the manipulations 24 hours later.

Day 1: The doctor did not numb my hand with anything other than an icy cold spray before injecting the Xiaflex. He used a very small needle and injected in multiple places: in the nodules as well as along the cords. There was some stinging, but not unbearable.

My hand was then wrapped in gauze and I was told not to move my hand or fingers, so the medicine would not be dispersed. The doctor wanted the Xiaflex to stay in the affected area as long as possible. I was not in any pain, maybe slightly achy, but I was able to go to a museum, out to lunch and take a walk on the beach without any discomfort. He did say that I might have some soreness at my elbow and my armpit, which I did experience. They felt a bit tender.

Day 2: The next morning as I was getting ready I squeezed my hand and felt a tearing sensation inside my hand. It made me cringe, but was not particularly painful. At the office when they unwrapped my hand it had swollen from the day before. The doctor injected my hand with Novocain (or something similar) to completely numb my hand. I did not watch the manipulation, but felt my hand and fingers being bent back and forth multiple times. With the numbing I did not feel the tearing sensations. The doctor indicated when each of the cords was breaking (as there were several interns watching!) I did have some skin tears due to the manipulation. I don't know if it was due to the swelling that cause them. (Originally I was to come back 48 hours after the injections, but there was a scheduling conflict so I came back after 24 hours. I wonder now if there would have been less swelling and therefore less tearing. I was told I could come back even weeks after the injections to have the manipulation done.)

My hand was bandaged and wrapped in a soft arm splint to protect it and I was sent off to get antibiotics and pain killers. The doctor said it



Before Xiaflex



After injections



would feel like my hand was hit by a brick and recommended to take pain killers before the numbness wore off.

I did take pain relievers. There was some pain at the tear sites and a general ache throughout my hand. But I was numb enough to do some gentle sightseeing that day. The pain killer made me feel worse than the hand did. By mid-afternoon, I was pretty pooped. It was somewhat hard to sleep with the splint and the achiness.

Day 3: I did not have follow up appointment, but did have to go to hand physical therapy. The therapist cleaned my wound, re-bandaged it and took away the arm splint and gave me one that I wear at night for the next 4 months. For rehabilitation I am to stretch my fingers straight and a little back to make sure I keep the muscle or tendon long.

I felt achy for a few days, but stopped taking the heavy duty pain relievers 2 days after, as they were making me nauseous. I went back to work 6 days after the injections. My lesions are healing well. The one at the base of my finger, however, developed granulated tissue in the process. My primary care doctor says that it is over-exuberant tissue repair. She has been treating it with silver nitrate which helps it heal properly. Silver nitrate stains the skin black.

Although I am now able to press my hand flat on a table, I can still feel something beneath the skin of my palm. There is still some slight swelling and tenderness, especially at the base of my little finger, though the large nodules seem to have disappeared. My fingers seem to want to curl under or maybe it is just habit, so I have to stretch them out straight from time to time. I can now do yoga again and even lift light weights, but I don't think I have healed enough to hold a tennis racket yet.

After manipulations



3 days after manipulation



Night splint



3 weeks after manipulation. The black marks are from the silver nitrate not bruising.