

Joint Synovectomy

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS



FINGER JOINT

Inflamed synovium

Joint capsule

Synovium removed

Overview

This procedure removes diseased or damaged synovium, a thin layer of tissue that lines joint capsules and tendon sheaths and provides lubrication for movement. The synovium can be inflamed for a variety of reasons, most commonly rheumatoid arthritis.

Preparation

After anesthesia is administered, the hand is cleaned and sterilized and positioned so that the affected area is clearly visible to the surgeon.

Accessing the Joint

For the joints the fingers, an incision is usually made on the top of the involved joint to allow direct access to the joint capsule, synovium, and articular surface. Larger joints may be treated arthroscopically through two or three small incisions.

Removing the Synovium

After entering the joint, the surgeon removes the diseased and inflamed synovium from the joint capsule. If needed, the surgeon may also perform other repairs such as ligament repair or soft tissue reconstruction.

End of Procedure

The incisions are closed with fine sutures, and a bandage is applied. Local anesthetic is usually injected for pain relief after the procedure. A splint is usually applied to protect the hand as it heals, and elevation is encouraged to minimize postoperative swelling.