

The following is an excerpt from *Your Health* magazine:



Story and Photo by Cooper Clinic, P.A.

## RELIEF AND IMPROVED FUNCTION FOR HAND AND WRIST PAIN SUFFERERS

Our hands are crucial for everything we do—working, eating, and completing everyday chores. But disease can make using our hands a real challenge. Carpal tunnel can cause chronic pain both day and night. Trigger finger may cause a finger to catch or lock. Arthritis can make it hard to hold a coffee cup or even tie your shoe.

For some, nonsurgical treatment may provide relief. But for many, surgery may be required to end the pain and increase function.

Dr. Eric Heim, a Cooper Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon, is Fellowship-trained in surgery of the hand and wrist in both adults and children. He explained, “From joint replacement to relaxation of tendons, there are almost as many surgical options as there are painful conditions of the hand. The chosen course of treatment should be one that has the best chance of providing long-term pain relief and return to function. Also, an improvement in the appearance of deformed joints, especially in the hand, can be expected with some types of surgery. In other words, surgery must be tailored to your individual needs.”

After any type of joint reconstruction

surgery, there is a period of recovery. The length of recovery time varies widely depending on the extent of the hand surgery performed. However, people can usually return to most, if not all, routine activities in about three months. To maximize recovery, patients may be referred to a trained physical or occupational therapist. A postoperative splint or cast may also be required to protect the hand while it heals. And during this postoperative period, activities may need to be modified to accelerate healing.

Dr. Heim continued, “After graduating from high school in Fort Smith, I completed medical school and residency at UAMS in Little Rock, after which I received Fellowship training in Adult and Pediatric Hand Surgery at the University of Colorado Denver. Now, I am grateful for the chance to use my training back in my hometown.”

Dr. Eric Heim joined Cooper Clinic in 2015. He performs hand and wrist surgery at Sparks Regional Medical Center and Mercy Fort Smith.

