What is the treatment?

Non-Operative Treatments:
- Medication: such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatories e.g. Ibuprofen can help with swelling/inflammation and pain killers can help alleviate pain
- Splinting: Sometimes splints can be used to protect and support the joint to help alleviate some of the pain
- Joint protection advice/ aids: Sometimes advice on how to protect your joints throughout every day tasks can help to alleviate symptoms
- Steroid Injections: Localised injections directly into the affected joint can help to reduce inflammation and pain

Operative Treatments:
- Joint replacements: special prosthetics/false joints are put in place of the arthritic joint to enable less painful movement
- Joint Fusions: a plate and screws is put across the joint in question to hold it rigid in one position to alleviate symptoms caused by movement. The finger will not bend at this joint after this operation.

If you have any Questions about this condition/operation bring them to the next appointment with your surgeon.
If you have any questions about the information on this leaflet you can contact a member of the Hand Therapy Team on (01246) 512177

Osteoarthritis of the proximal interphalangeal joint.
You have been diagnosed with osteoarthritis of the Proximal Phalangeal Joint (PIP joint). This information sheet is designed to provide you with some basic information about the condition and the ways in which it can be managed.

About the proximal inter-phalangeal Joint (PIP) joint.

The proximal inter-phalangeal (PIP) joint is the joint in the middle of each of your fingers. It flexes and extends to allow you to straighten your finger and make a fist.
What Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative joint disease which causes the cartilage surrounding bones to wear away. Cartilage is tough but flexible and surrounds the ends of the bones allowing them to move over one another forming a joint. When the cartilage wears away bone rubs on bone which gives rise to a painful inflamed joint.

Why does it occur?

OA is a common degenerative disease affecting joints. Anyone can get it but there are a number of factors that may increase the risk of osteoarthritis:

- Age; OA tends to affect people aged 40+ as muscles become weaker and joints gradually wear over time
- Gender; OA is more common in females than males (particularly in the hands and knees)
- Weight; being over-weight puts more stress on your joints and can increase your chance of developing OA
- Family; some forms of OA run strongly in families and can be linked to genetics
- Previous injury; an injury such as a fracture or ligament damage can lead to OA in a joint.
- Other joint diseases: such as rheumatoid arthritis / gout can increase the risk of developing OA

What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms of OA in the PIP joint are pain in the area on movement and swelling around the joint. People may also experience:

- difficulty gripping/ weakness
- Stiffness
- Enlarged appearance of the joint
- Limited movement
- Altered positng of the fingers

What tests might be done?

X-Rays of the finger may be needed to allow the doctor to see which areas are affected by arthritis. Sometimes CT scans (also known as CAT scans) may be undertaken to give the doctor a more in-depth view of the finger to diagnose the problem. Blood tests may be required to rule out any other cause for finger pain such as rheumatoid arthritis.