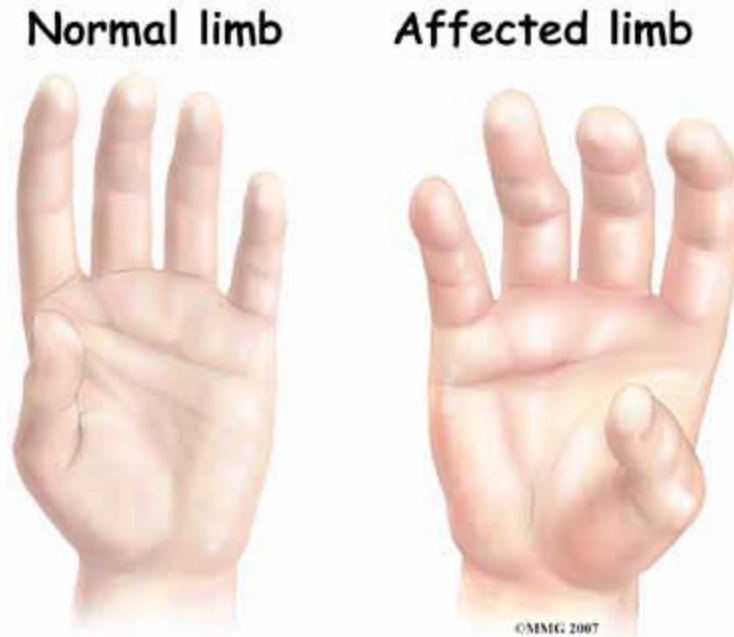


## CHRONIC REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME (CRPS)



### **Definition:**

Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) is characterised by severe pain, swelling and changes in the skin. It typically develops after an injury, surgery, stroke or heart attack, but the pain is out of proportion to the severity of the initial injury, if any.

The symptoms of CRPS usually initially manifest near the site of an injury. The most common symptoms overall are burning sensations, stabbing pain, grinding pain, severe tingles and electrical sensations. Moving or touching the limb is often intolerable. The patient may also experience muscle spasms, local swelling, abnormally increased sweating, changes in skin temperature and colour, softening and thinning of bones, joint tenderness or stiffness, and restricted or painful movement.

The cause of CRPS isn't clearly understood. Treatment is mostly effective when started early. In such cases, improvement and even remission are possible.

There are many different treatment modalities that your surgeon could suggest. This may include drugs such as corticosteroids, antidepressants or opioids. Local anaesthetic blocks/injections have also been known to be successful.

### **Hand Therapy:**

CRPS is one of the greatest challenges faced by a hand therapist and it is not always possible to achieve a successful outcome. Therapy will focus on desensitising the affected hand through the use of different treatment modalities such as mirror therapy, graded motor imagery, tactile discrimination training and topical treatment. These modalities are used in adjunctively in restoring motion and improving functional use of the hand.