

What is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome?

Your carpal tunnel is a channel at the wrist that runs between the bones and a strong band of connective tissue. Within this tunnel you have blood vessels, the median nerve and several tendons that help you move your fingers and wrist.

When the median nerve runs through this tunnel it can be compressed and may result in carpal tunnel syndrome.

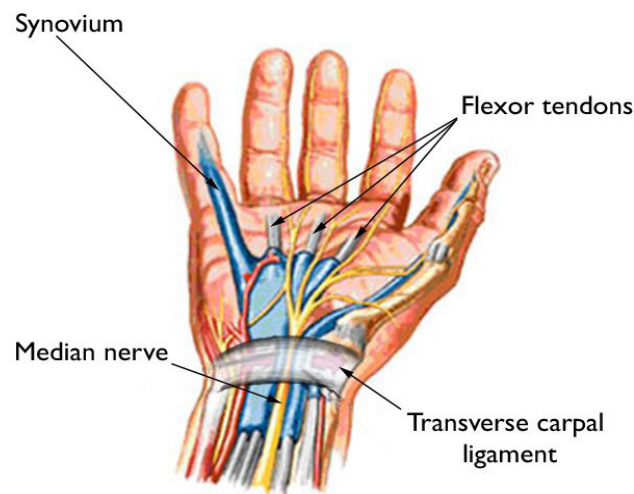


Diagram with the permission of American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS)

Who gets it?

- It is more common in females than males
- It is more common in people who are obese
- It is more common during pregnancy
- It is more common in people with diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and thyroid problems

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome include pain, a tingling sensation, numbness and/or a burning sensation in the hand or fingers. It is unusual for the little finger to be involved.
- Symptoms are commonly said to be worse at night or first thing in the morning.
- Symptoms may be provoked by activities that involve gripping an object, i.e. a mobile telephone or newspaper.
- In the early stages, numbness and tingling may come and go and sensation should return to normal.
- If the condition worsens, the altered feeling may become continuous alongside weakness and wasting of muscles at the base of the thumb.
- In some cases, nerve conduction tests are needed to confirm the diagnosis.

Things that can help relieve the symptoms:

General Measures – Try not to overuse your wrist by excessive squeezing, gripping, wringing etc. Overuse of the affected hand can often result in an increase in your symptoms. Try and avoid heavy lifting/carrying and repetitive actions. Putting weight through the palm of your hand should be avoided. Carpal tunnel syndrome in pregnancy normally resolves after the baby is born.

Wrist Splint – A removable wrist splint for night time is often advised. The aim of the splint is to keep the wrist at a neutral angle to reduce pressure on the nerve. You may find consistently wearing the splint at night for up to 3 months will give you some relief.

Steroid Injection – An injection into or near to the carpal tunnel may be an option.

Surgery – A surgical option may be indicated in severe cases. A small cut is made on the palm of your hand, cutting the tight ligament (the flexor retinaculum) that forms the roof of the carpal tunnel. This stops the nerve being compressed. Symptoms may continue to improve for up to 6 months. Surgery is usually safe and effective but complications may occur. You will need to know about these complications to help you make an informed decision about surgery. The surgery will be performed under local anaesthesia.

The outcome is usually satisfactory resolution of symptoms. Night pain and tingling usually resolve within a few days. In severe cases, improvement of constant numbness and muscle weakness may be slow or incomplete. It generally takes up to 3 months to regain full strength and a fully comfortable scar.

When to return to clinic

If your numbness, pins and needles or pain become constant or you have any visible wasting or weakness of the muscles at the base of the thumb you should return to your GP or MSK Team for further advice.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

MSK (Musculoskeletal) Team
Calderdale Royal Hospital
Main switchboard: 01422 357171 Extension 2677

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਬ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੇਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੁਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ میں درکار ہوں، تو براہ کرم مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"