

# CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) is a problem that affects the wrist and hand. Symptoms of CTS are tingling and numbness, which can make simple task hard to do. This can be treated, and these symptoms can be controlled.

## The Symptoms of CTS

Tingling and numbness are the most common symptoms. Another symptom can be hand pain and/or weakness in grip. These symptoms can wake you up at night. Later they can occur during your daily tasks. You may notice symptoms while driving, keyboarding, or holding a newspaper. Your symptoms may increase with time.

## Working with Your Doctor

Your primary doctor may order a nerve conduction study and/or refer you to an Orthopedic surgeon. You and your surgeon can then make a treatment plan. If you decide to have surgery, this will be scheduled at an outpatient facility and you will go home the same day.

## What is the Carpal Tunnel?

The carpal tunnel is a thin space inside the wrist. This is where certain tendons and major nerves pass from the forearm into the hand.

## Treatment of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

One suggestion your doctor may make in treating your symptoms is to take aspirin or ibuprofen. This can help reduce pain and swelling. But if you need to use these medications on a daily basis, call your doctor. He may want to try a prescription medication instead.

Your doctor may prescribe a splint for you to wear, either at night or during the day. This may help reduce your symptoms. A splint helps keep the wrist in a neutral position, which prevents extreme movement that can narrow the carpal tunnel.

If your carpal tunnel symptoms become severe enough, surgery may be performed. There are two types of carpal tunnel surgery. You will be told about the one you are to have. The two types of carpal tunnel surgery are **OPEN** and **ENDOSCOPIC**. These surgeries will relieve pressure on the median nerve. To do this, the transverse carpal ligament is cut (released). Surgery for CTS often takes about an hour.

**OPEN-** The surgeon makes one incision in your palm. He then releases the transverse carpal ligament.

**ENDOSCOPIC**-One or two small incisions are made in your hand. A scope (with a very small camera attached) and tools are inserted under the transverse carpal ligament. The surgeon operates while watching images on a video screen.

## **After Carpal Tunnel Surgery**

After having carpal tunnel surgery you will rest for several hours before being sent home. The nerve sensation and circulation in your hand will be checked before you are released to go home. For the best results, keep these instructions in mind.

Keep your hand raised above heart level. This will help reduce swelling.

Limit hand and wrist use as instructed

Take any pain medication as directed

Do hand exercises as directed by your health care provider. These will help ease you back into action.