
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Surgical Treatment

THE CARPAL TUNNEL DECOMPRESSION OPERATION

Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by the large median nerve being squashed between the tendons in the carpal tunnel and the thick ligament forming the roof of the tunnel over the top of it. The squashing of the nerve reduces the blood flow around the nerve, which causes pins and needles.

The operation for carpal tunnel syndrome releases the pressure on the nerve by cutting the ligament that is squashing it. This allows better blood flow around the nerve, improving the symptoms. The vast majority of these operations are done under a local anaesthetic (a numbing injection) with you awake. It is also usually done as a day case operation. Do not drive to the hospital yourself. You will need a responsible adult to pick you up after your surgery.

AFTER THE OPERATION

You will find that there is a large bandage on your hand. It is important to move your fingers and thumb after the operation to stop them stiffening. Remove the heavy bandage after four days to allow better movement but keep the stitches covered and dry, with the dressings provided. They will be removed 10-14 days after the surgery and you will be asked to start massaging the scar with a moisturiser.

You may get back to driving after the stitches are out and can consider going back to work although people doing heavy manual jobs may need up to four weeks off.

RISKS OF SURGERY

Generally, this procedure is considered to be very effective and low risk. However some people may have problems. The commonest of these is tenderness of the scar, which is usually temporary and is helped by scar massage. Other problems are swelling and stiffness of the hand, which if severe is called reflex sympathetic dystrophy and is rare. Infection is also rare. Occasionally the symptoms return after a period of time and occasionally they do not completely disappear after the surgery, particularly if the nerve has been trapped for a very long time. Occasionally discomfort may be experienced for a few months on the side of the hand.

FOR ANY PROBLEMS OR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Note: These instructions are to serve as guideline and are subject to vary depending on the individual.

