

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Signs or Symptoms

- Tingling or numbness in the fingers or hand
- Pain radiating or extending from the wrist up the front of the arm to the elbow
- Weakness in the hands
- A tendency to drop objects
- Loss of feeling in some fingers

Description

Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by irritation of the median nerve. The median nerve provides sensation to the thumb, index, middle and ring fingers.

Causes

Causes might include anything from bone spurs to swelling or thickening of the outermost layer of the tendons in the carpal tunnel. Repetitive stress by overusing the hand and wrist are common causes of this condition. However, there are many cases where the nerves in the arm can be entrapped in other locations that can cause the same symptoms. These other areas can include the neck, shoulder and elbow.

Treatment

This condition is the end result of inflammation around the median nerve. It could be from a single incident, or many minor traumas. The treatment begins by assessing which muscles, tendons and ligaments have been damaged and returning them to normal functioning. The positions of the bones of the wrist are evaluated and manipulation is used to realign them if they are found "out of place". Testing is used to determine if there are basic nutritional imbalances that are limiting your body's ability to speed the recovery. Lifestyle modifications are used to prevent or minimize exacerbation of the condition. In severe cases corticosteroids may be used. Surgery is rarely suggested, as its success rate can range from 30%-70%