

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

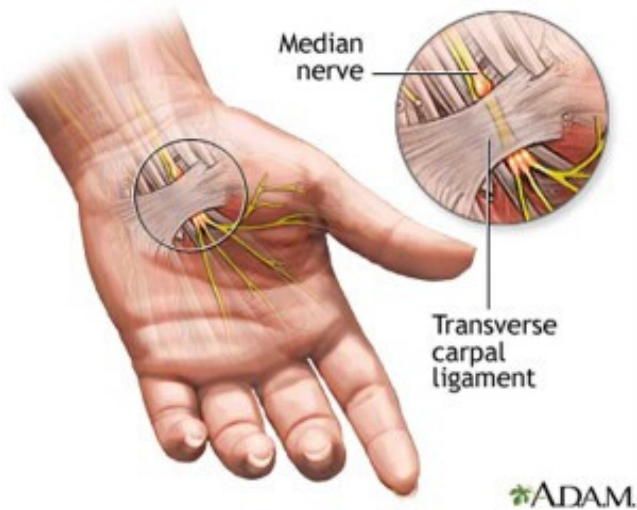
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What is it?

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) occurs when the median nerve is compressed as it passes through the tunnel of the wrist. The tunnel is surrounded by bones, ligaments and tendons. The median nerve provides sensation to the skin of the palm, thumb, index, middle fingers, and half the ring finger, as well as supplying the muscles of the thumb.

What causes it?

Swelling or inflammation of the structures within the tunnel causes the compression on the nerve. This can occur as a result of repetitive motions of the wrist such as prolonged use of a computer mouse use or vibrational tools, but the causative factor is not always known.

Pre-existing Medical Conditions

Certain medical conditions can predispose a person to CTS:

- Diabetes
- Thyroid dysfunction
- High blood pressure
- Fluid retention from pregnancy or menopause
- Autoimmune disorders e.g. rheumatoid arthritis
- Fractures or trauma to the wrist

Signs and Symptoms

Signs and symptoms in the hand (thumb, index, middle, half the ring finger, and palm):

- Pins and needles
- Tingling
- Numbness
- Pain
- Weakness or clumsiness of the hand
- Pain can sometimes be referred into the arm or shoulder
- Symptoms are often worse at night

Physiotherapy Management

- Provision of a night splint in a neutral wrist position to improve the posture of the wrist
- Tendon gliding exercises to mobilise the tendons in the tunnel
- Massage and mobilisation of the wrist bones and soft tissues
- Advice on pacing activities and modifying if necessary
- Advice on ergonomics, posture and sleeping positions
- Nerve gliding exercises of the arm

Further Management

Cortisone injection into the wrist may be helpful if physiotherapy has not relieved symptoms.

Surgical decompression of the tunnel by a hand surgeon may be necessary if physiotherapy does not help.

Contact Us

Do not hesitate to contact us should you require a hand consultation with our hand physiotherapist Jane Leathwood. Please call us on 02 9907 0321 to make a booking or email reception@totalphysiomv.com for more information.