

Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Carpal tunnel decompression

What is carpal tunnel decompression?

One form of treatment for carpal tunnel syndrome is an operation called 'carpal tunnel decompression', which has been recommended for you.

- The operation involves cutting the ligament and releasing pressure on the median nerve at the wrist.
- It is carried out under local anaesthetic as an outpatient and can take about 30 minutes.
- You may eat and drink as normal before and after your operation.

You may experience some bruising and soreness after the operation has taken place. The aim of the operation is to prevent permanent damage to the median nerve, to preserve hand function and in most patients to relieve symptoms.

Post operative instructions

- The bandage should stay in place until the stitches are removed unless instructed otherwise.
- If a sling has been given to you after surgery to keep the hand up for 48hours, please wear the sling during the day and rest your arm on pillows overnight. Continue to keep the hand raised above heart level as much as possible after this to reduce the swelling.
- Perform regular finger exercises such as bending and (straightening).
- Keep the hand clean and dry.
- If using rubber gloves remember that prolonged use will cause sweating and moistness which can cause complications.
- If your hand becomes cold or blue please loosen the bandage slightly.

- If your hand becomes painful as the local anaesthetic wears off, paracetamol or a similar pain killer may be taken according to manufacturer’s instructions. If the pain is excessive or your fingers are swollen, please contact the clinic or your GP, although this is unusual.
- Do not lift heavy objects until your hand has healed. This may take six weeks or more.

Please attend hospital or GP surgery for the removal of stitches on:

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The appointment has been made for you.

You will be seen in outpatients.

If you are worried about your condition please contact:

- Clinic seven plastics on 01223 216098, 08:00 until 17:00 or your GP.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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