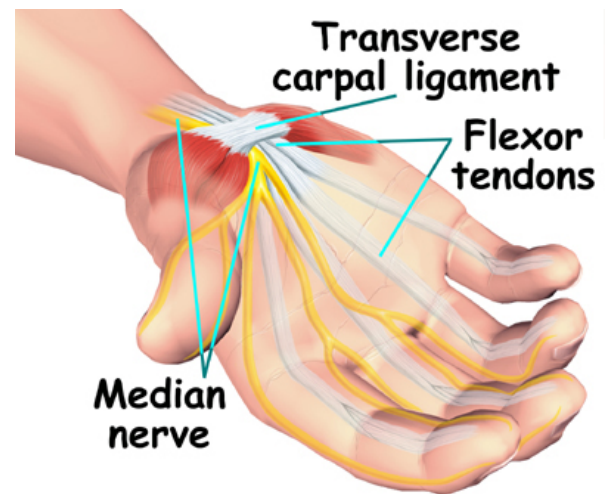




Carpal Tunnel Syndrome--What Is It?

Carpal tunnel syndrome has received much media attention in recent years. Still, there appears to be some confusion about the definition of the ailment and how it is diagnosed. Carpal tunnel syndrome happens when the median nerve, which stretches from the forearm into the hand, becomes pressed or squeezed at the wrist. This is significant because the median nerve controls sensations to the palm side of the thumb and fingers, as well as impulses to some of the muscles in the hand that permit the fingers and thumb to move.

The median nerve rests inside a tunnel in the hand whose floor and walls are made up of bones known as carpal bones. The roof of the tunnel is a structure known as the transverse carpal ligament. In addition to the nerve, there are nine tendons which move the fingers and thumb that pass through the tunnel. When the lining around the tendons becomes inflamed, there is less space for the nerve and it becomes compressed. The compression of the nerve gives rise to the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome.



The symptoms associated with carpal tunnel syndrome include a numbness and tingling in the hand, often occurring at night. Those afflicted also frequently complain of pain and weakness in the hand, especially the thumb. If the condition is untreated, it can lead to atrophy of the muscles in the base of the thumb.



What are the real causes of carpal tunnel syndrome?

Carpal tunnel syndrome tends to be associated with certain tasks involving the hands. These include repetitive hand motions, awkward hand positions, strong gripping, mechanical stress on the palm, and vibration.

There are a number of occupations and job tasks which have been linked with carpal tunnel syndrome. For instance, a tailor or garment worker might develop the syndrome from grasping and tugging fabric or pulling cloth.

A farmer could develop it milking cows, or an assembly line worker might experience it handling objects on a conveyor belt.

Mechanics have been known to develop it pushing down a ratchet or using a screw driver, while gardeners can experience it from hand weeding.

Painters using spray guns can experience carpal tunnel symptoms, as well as janitors who find themselves routinely scrubbing.

Others who may experience carpal tunnel symptoms include musicians, cashiers, clerical workers, butchers, locksmiths, carpenters, and stable hands.

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A common aspect that turns a typical activity into one that can develop into carpal tunnel syndrome is the lack of frequent, short, rests. It is the constant stress over an extended length of time that creates the inflammation that leads to the syndrome.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome affects an estimated 3 percent of adult Americans and is approximately three times more common in women than in men. High prevalence rates have been reported in persons who perform certain repetitive **wrist** motions, but the significance of this relationship continues to be challenged.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is commonly treated by chiropractors. The methods most chiropractors use to treat Carpal Tunnel Syndrome include manipulation of the wrist, elbow, and upper spine, ultrasound therapy, and wrist supports. Two studies support the use of chiropractic treatment for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

In a study of 25 individuals diagnosed with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome all of the participants reported significant improvements in several measures of strength, range of motion, and pain after receiving chiropractic treatment. Most of these improvements were maintained for at least 6 months.

A second study compared the effects of chiropractic care with conservative medical care (wrist supports and ibuprofen) among 91 people with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Both groups experienced significant improvement in nerve function, finger sensation, and comfort. The researchers concluded that chiropractic treatment and conservative medical care are equally effective for people with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

Call us today to arrange for a **FREE** initial evaluation.