

# Carpal Tunnel Release

## Patient Information

Upper Limb Department



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:  
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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**Our Values**

People at  
the Heart

Listen and  
Involve

Kind and  
Respectful

One  
Team

## **What is carpal tunnel syndrome?**

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a condition that causes pain, numbness and a burning or tingling sensation to the hand and fingers.

The carpal tunnel is a small tunnel that runs from the bottom of your wrist to your lower palm. Several tendons pass through the carpal tunnel, which helps to move your fingers. The median nerve also passes through the tunnel and this controls the sensation and movement to your hand.

In carpal tunnel syndrome there is an increased pressure in the tunnel which causes compression of the nerve, resulting in the symptoms of pain and numbness.

## **Treatment options**

If the symptoms are mild, then wearing a wrist splint at night might help. A steroid injection can also reduce the symptoms. If the symptoms are severe or these simple treatments have failed, then surgery is recommended.

## **Benefits of surgery**

The main benefits of surgery are the relief of numbness and pain. In most cases surgery can provide a lasting cure.

## **About the operation**

This operation is performed as a day case, so you can go home the same day as your operation. The operation is usually performed under local (awake) anaesthetic; general anaesthetic (asleep) is used for some cases. Surgery involves cutting the ligament that surrounds the carpal tunnel in order to reduce the pressure on the nerve. The cut is in the palm of your hand and is closed with stitches.

## **After the operation**

After the operation you will return to the ward. You will have a bandage on your hand and may be asked to wear a sling. You will be asked to reduce your own dressings in 2–3 days by removing the outer bandaging and padding, while leaving the wound dressing in place. Replacement dressings will be supplied. Heavy tasks should be avoided, but you should exercise your fingers, elbow and shoulder to prevent stiffness.

People who have this surgery will normally recover from the effects of surgery within a month. If the nerve has been compressed for a long time the symptoms may take longer to resolve. Once sutures (stitches) are removed and the wound is healed, massaging firmly along the scar with unscented moisturiser will help to reduce any residual swelling and sensitivity

### **Complications of carpal tunnel release surgery**

Reported complications include infection, post-operative bleeding, nerve injury, persistent wrist pain and the return of carpal tunnel symptoms.

If you are worried about anything in hospital or at home, you should speak to a member of the Health Care Team or contact Ward 1, Wrightington Hospital on:  
**01257 256550 / 6551**

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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