Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Ulna Nerve Release

Version number: **6**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Ulnar Nerve Release

Patient Information

Trauma and Orthopaedics

- Author ID: LA/IJ
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- Version: 6
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What is ulnar nerve compression?

This is a condition that causes numbness of the little and ring fingers. The ulnar nerve is one of the main nerves to the hand and travels round the back of your elbow, often referred to as the “funny bone”. Ulnar nerve compression is a condition where there is increased pressure or irritation of this nerve, which produces the symptoms, and these are often worse if you keep your elbow bent for some time.

Treatment options

If the symptoms are mild, then wearing a splint worn at night to keep your elbow straight might help. If this is not successful or if the symptoms are severe then surgery is recommended to prevent permanent damage to the nerve.

Benefits of surgery

An operation will help prevent further damage to the affected nerve. You may find that the numbness in your hand will improve, but this will depend on how long you have had ulnar nerve compression.

About the operation

This operation is usually performed as a day case so you can go home the same day as your operation. The operation is usually performed under general anaesthetic (asleep) or local anaesthetic block this is when the whole arm is made numb by an anaesthetist for the procedure to be carried out (awake). A cut is made over the back of the elbow on the inner side. Any tight tissue that is compressing the nerve is then cut. The cut is then closed with

stitches or clips.

After the operation

After the operation you will return to the Ward from the recovery area. You will have a bulky bandage on your elbow. After a day or two, you can remove the bandage, but keep the stitches covered until they are removed. 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, although your symptoms may continue to improve for up to six months. If you have had a nerve block it can take 6-12 hours to wear off.

Complications of ulnar release surgery

Reported complications include:

- Infection
- Post-operative bleeding
- Nerve irritation

If you are worried or unsure about any aspect of your care in hospital, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the health care team.

Contact Details

Ward 1	01257 256272	Monday to Friday 07:30 to 19:30
D Ward	01257 256269	Monday to Friday 07:30 to 19:30
Hand Therapy	01257 488272	Monday to Friday 08:30 to 17:00

Outside of these hours, you can contact B Ward on 01257 256410.



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