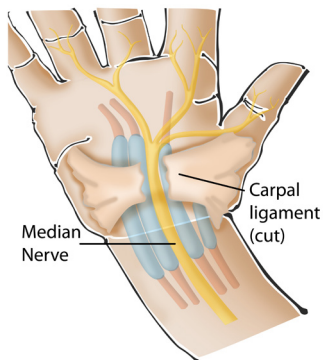


Carpal Tunnel

Decompression Surgery

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is a common condition which causes pain, numbness and a tingling sensation in the hand and fingers. Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by compression of the nerve that controls sensation and movement in the hands (Median nerve).

You have been advised to have Carpal Tunnel Decompression surgery.



During surgery

- This is usually performed as day surgery
- You will have a local anaesthetic
- The surgeon will cut through the ligament that is compressing the nerve, to relieve the pressure that is causing your symptoms
- The skin will be stitched closed and your wrist will be bandaged with a padded dressing to keep swelling to a minimum.

After surgery

- Your fingers will be numb for several hours due to the effects of the local anaesthetic used during surgery
- You may feel some discomfort
- In most cases the symptoms you had will usually go immediately after surgery, but can last for up to two to three weeks after the surgery
- The stitches will be removed at about two weeks; an appointment will be arranged before discharge
- It is normal to have a slight gapping of your scar after the stitches have been removed
- The scar is usually red and thick at first, but fades to a thin white line
- The scar may be sore for six to eight weeks.

Tips to help you in your recovery

- Take regular painkillers before the anaesthetic wears off
- Keep your hand up at heart level or higher to minimise the swelling
- Keep the wound dry and leave the dressing on until the stitches have been removed
- Start using your hand for light activities 48 hours after your surgery and gradually increase your activities. Your hand may feel weak and uncomfortable initially, but it is important that you return to normal activities as quickly as possible.

Below are some guidelines to help you:

Light activities (eg using cutlery) 48 hours

Light office work 1 - 3 weeks

Driving 2 - 4 weeks

Heavy/manual work 6 - 8 weeks

Exercises

Please complete your exercises as prescribed by your therapist



Bending and straightening fingers.



Bend from your knuckles, keeping fingers straight. Following this, perform the opposite movement.



Keeping your knuckles straight, curl all your finger joints.



Touch your thumb pad to the tip of each finger and over to the base of your little finger.



Touch your thumb pad to the tip of each finger and over to the base of your little finger.



Side bending of your wrist from left to right.

After the stitches are removed, the following exercises will help your hand and scar:

Median Nerve exercises

- Hold your arm out to the side.
- Bend your elbow to right angles, fingers pointing upwards, palm facing towards you.
- Bend your wrist back so that the palm faces upwards, hold for three seconds and return your wrist back to the middle.
- Repeat this wrist movement 10 times.



Your scar

You need to let your hand feel lots of different textures and conditions, for example:

- Gently rub your scar with rough and smooth things (eg emery board, towel, silk).
- Run warm and cold water over hand.
- Massage your scar with firm and light pressure using a cream eg E45 cream.

It is unusual to have any problems after this surgery. If any of the following symptoms occur you can arrange to see a doctor in the orthopaedic clinic:

- Throbbing pain and/or fever.
- Symptoms do not improve within four weeks of surgery.
- Permanent numbness of the skin on a finger or a thumb, which was not present before surgery.
- Normal movement of the hand does not return within four weeks of surgery.

For further information please contact:

Doncaster Royal Infirmary - 01302 644210

Bassetlaw Hospital - 01909 572302

Montagu Hospital - 01709 649190

Retford Hospital - 01777 863400

Patient Experience Team

The team are available to help with any concerns/complaints you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email.

The contact details are:

Telephone: 01302 642764 or 0800 028 8059

Email: dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net