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Get the latest research information from NIH: <https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus>

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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/carpaltunnelsyndrome.html>

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Also called: Median nerve entrapment

You're working at your desk, trying to ignore the tingling or numbness you've had for some time in your hand [<https://medlineplus.gov/handinjuriesanddisorders.html>] and wrist [<https://medlineplus.gov/wristinjuriesanddisorders.html>]. Suddenly, a sharp, piercing pain shoots through the wrist and up your arm. Just a passing cramp? It could be carpal tunnel syndrome.



The carpal tunnel is a narrow passageway of ligament and bones at the base of your hand. It contains nerve and tendons. Sometimes, thickening from irritated tendons or other swelling narrows the tunnel and causes the nerve to be compressed. Symptoms usually start gradually. As they worsen, grasping objects can become difficult.

Often, the cause is having a smaller carpal tunnel than other people do. Other causes include performing assembly line work, wrist injury, or swelling due to certain diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis. Women are three times more likely to have carpal tunnel syndrome than men.



Early diagnosis and treatment are important to prevent permanent nerve damage. Your doctor diagnoses carpal tunnel syndrome with a physical exam and special nerve tests. Treatment includes resting your hand, splints, pain and anti-inflammatory medicines, and sometimes surgery.

NIH: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Start Here

- **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome** [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Carpal-Tunnel-Syndrome-Fact-Sheet>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
Also in Spanish [https://espanol.ninds.nih.gov/trastornos/tunel_carpiano.htm]
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome [<https://www.rheumatology.org/I-Am-A/Patient-Caregiver/Diseases-Conditions/Carpal-Tunnel-Syndrome>] (American College of Rheumatology)
- Finger Numbness: Could It Be Carpal Tunnel Syndrome? [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2020/03/finger-numbness>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/articulo/entumecimiento-de-los-dedos/>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Electromyography (EMG) and Nerve Conduction Studies [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/electromyography-emg-and-nerve-conduction-studies/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/electromiografia-y-estudios-de-conduccion-nerviosa/>]
- Wrist Pain [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/wrist-pain/symptoms-causes/syc-20366213?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es-es/diseases-conditions/wrist-pain/symptoms-causes/syc-20366213?p=1>]
- X-Rays: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/xrays.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/xrays.html>]



Prevention and Risk Factors

- **Computer Workstations: Keyboards**
[https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/components_keyboards.html]
(Occupational Safety and Health Administration)
- **Computer Workstations: Wrist/Palm Supports**
[https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/components_wrist_rests.html]
(Occupational Safety and Health Administration)

Treatments and Therapies

- **About Hand Surgery** [<https://www.assh.org/handcare/about>] (American Society for Surgery of the Hand)
- **Carpal Tunnel Exercises: Can They Relieve Symptoms?** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/carpal-tunnel-syndrome/expert-answers/carpal-tunnel-exercises/FAQ-20058125?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es-es/diseases-conditions/carpal-tunnel-syndrome/expert-answers/carpal-tunnel-exercises/faq-20058125?p=1>]
- **Carpal tunnel repair – slideshow** [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100078_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100078_1.htm]
- **Hand Surgery Anesthesia** [<https://www.assh.org/handcare/condition/hand-surgery-anesthesia>]
(American Society for Surgery of the Hand)
- **Joint and Soft Tissue Injections** [<https://familydoctor.org/joint-and-soft-tissue-injections/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/inyecciones-en-las-articulaciones-y-en-los-tejidos-blandos/?adfree=true>]
- **Wrist Surgery: Arthroscopy** [<https://www.assh.org/handcare/condition/wrist-surgery-arthroscopy>]
(American Society for Surgery of the Hand)

Genetics

- **carpal tunnel syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics** [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/carpal-tunnel-syndrome>]
 (National Library of Medicine)
- **hereditary neuropathy with liability to pressure palsies: MedlinePlus Genetics**
[<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/hereditary-neuropathy-with-liability-to-pressure-palsies>]
 (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials


- **ClinicalTrials.gov: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**
[<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Carpal+Tunnel+Syndrome%22>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- **Article: Value of ultrasonography in the diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome—a new...**
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32702832>]
- **Article: Endoscopic Carpal Tunnel Release: Indications, Technique, and Outcomes.**
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32498954>]
- **Article: Risk of carpal tunnel syndrome after parathyroidectomy in patients with end-stage...**
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32443382>]
- **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome -- see more articles** [[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=carpal+tunnel+syndrome\[majr\]+AND+english\[la\]+AND+humans\[mh\]+AND+\(review\[pt\]+OR+guideline\[pt\]+OR+jsubetaim\[text\]+OR+jsubsetk\[text\]+OR+jsubsetn\[text\]\)+NOT+\(letter\[pt\]+OR+editorial\[pt\]\)+AND+%22last+1+Year%22\[edat\]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=carpal+tunnel+syndrome[majr]+AND+english[la]+AND+humans[mh]+AND+(review[pt]+OR+guideline[pt]+OR+jsubetaim[text]+OR+jsubsetk[text]+OR+jsubsetn[text])+NOT+(letter[pt]+OR+editorial[pt])+AND+%22last+1+Year%22[edat])]

Find an Expert

- American Society for Surgery of the Hand [<https://www.asssh.org/s/>]
- Find a Hand Surgeon [<https://www.asssh.org/handcare/fahs>] (American Society for Surgery of the Hand)
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.ninds.nih.gov/>]

Women

- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome [<https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/carpal-tunnel-syndrome>]
(Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/carpal-tunnel-syndrome>]

Patient Handouts

- Carpal tunnel biopsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003925.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003925.htm>]
- Carpal tunnel release [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002976.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002976.htm>]
- Carpal tunnel syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000433.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000433.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

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Related Health Topics

Hand Injuries and Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/handinjuriesanddisorders.html>]
 Wrist Injuries and Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/wristinjuriesanddisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* is the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>]

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