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## What is Carpal Tunnel?

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is caused by pressure in the wrist on the median nerve. Common symptoms include pain and numbness in the hand, often worse at night or when the hand is in use.

Many conditions, including diabetes, put people at risk for CTS. It can be caused by repetitive use of the hand, but people who don't have this history may still get CTS. CTS is diagnosed by history, an examination, and nerve testing.

## Who Should Have a Carpal Tunnel Release?

Patients who have significant symptoms of numbness, dropping items, weakness, and who fail to improve with anti-inflammatory medicines, wrist braces, therapy, and other treatments, may benefit from carpal tunnel surgery.

## What Happens During the Surgery?

An incision, or cut, is made extending from the wrist up into the hand. The ligament over the nerve is cut so that the pressure is taken off. The wound is closed with stitches and a dressing applied.

## What are the Risks of the Surgery?

There is a small risk of infection or nerve damage. Although discomfort from the scar is normal after the surgery, if it persists it is known as pillar syndrome and treated with therapy. Rarely, chronic pain in the arm, known as chronic regional pain syndrome, may develop after surgery or trauma on a limb.

## What is Recovery Like?

After surgery, patients go home the same day, and should elevate the arm for 48 hours. The dressing can be changed after three days, and the sutures are removed 10-12 days after the surgery. Most patients can return to work in 2-3 weeks. The pain from the incision can be controlled with medicines such as ibuprofen or Tylenol. A small amount of stronger pain medicine may be needed by some patients for a few days.

If you have any questions or concerns after the surgery, please contact our office at 401-606-6360. If you feel it is an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department.



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