Carpal tunnel syndrome
Also called: median nerve compression

A numbness and tingling in the hand and arm caused by a pinched nerve in the wrist.

Very common
More than 3 million US cases per year

- Treatable by a medical professional
- Requires a medical diagnosis
- Lab tests or imaging rarely required
- Medium-term: resolves within months

Wrist anatomy, underlying health conditions, and patterns of hand use can contribute to carpal tunnel syndrome.
Key symptoms are pain in the hand and arm with numbness or tingling.
Treatment may include rest, ice, wrist splints, cortisone injections, and surgery.

Ages affected

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-13</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>14-18</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>19-40</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>41-60</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>60+</td>
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Symptoms
Requires a medical diagnosis
Key symptoms are pain in the hand and arm with numbness or tingling.

People may experience:
Pain areas: in the hands, wrist, or forearm
Also common: hand numbness, sensation of pins and needles, hand clumsiness, hand pain at night, hand weakness, or wrist weakness

Treatments
Treatment consists of activity modifications and devices
Treatment may include rest, ice, wrist splints, cortisone injections, and surgery.
Devices

Splint: A rigid accessory used to stabilize and protect an injured joint.

Medications

Steroid: Modifies or simulates hormone effects, often to reduce inflammation or for tissue growth and repair.
- Prednisone (Deltasone, Rayos, and Prednisone Intensol)
- Prednisolone (Pediapred, Veripred 20, Millipred DP, and Orapred ODT)
- Betamethasone (Betaloan SUIK, Celestone Soluspan, and Beta-1)
- Methylprednisolone (Medrol, Solu-Medrol, and Depo-Medrol)

Nonsteroidal anti-Inflammatory drug: Relieves pain, decreases inflammation, and reduces fever.
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Children's Profen IB, Children's Ibu-Drops, I-Prin, and Motrin IB)

Surgery

Carpal tunnel surgery: Performed to relieve pressure on the nerve passing through the wrist.

Self-care

Ice pack: Reduces inflammation and dulls sensation of pain.
Rest: Reducing activity for a short period of time following an injury to promote healing.

Therapies

Stretching: Stretching exercises can improve flexibility and improve physical function.

Specialists

Primary care provider (PCP): Prevents, diagnoses, and treats diseases.
Occupational therapist: Improves daily living and work skills of patients.
Physical medicine and rehabilitation: Restores function and quality of life to those with physical disabilities.
Physical therapist: Restores muscle strength and function through exercise.
Neurologist: Treats nervous system disorders.
Hand surgeon: Performs surgery to treat hand conditions.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and others. Learn more