

SUSSEX SHOULDER & ELBOW

08

Cubital Tunnel Syndrome

What is cubital tunnel syndrome?

Cubital tunnel syndrome (CTS) is a condition that results in compression of the ulna nerve as it courses around the inside of the elbow. The 'cubital tunnel' is the name given to the anatomic space where the nerve can become entrapped at the elbow. CTS is common and can occur in men and women.

What are the symptoms of cubital tunnel syndrome?

The ulna nerve supplies sensation to the little and ring fingers, hence numbness and tingling is usually felt in these fingers. If there is tingling or numbness in any of your other fingers you may have a different type of nerve compression. The ulna nerve also supplies many of the small muscles in the hand so CTS can result in clumsiness of the hand, weakness or muscle wasting.

How is cubital tunnel syndrome diagnosed?

After taking a thorough history regarding the duration and nature of your symptoms, we will perform a detailed clinical examination of your hands, elbow and neck. If CTS is suspected you will require nerve conduction studies to confirm the diagnosis. You may also have an X ray performed to check that there is no bony cause for your symptoms.

How can CTS be treated?

If the symptoms are mild and intermittent, the condition can be managed without surgery. This includes modifying activities that increase the symptoms such as leaning on the elbow or holding the elbow bent for prolonged periods of time. In mild cases the symptoms may resolve over time with simple measures. If the numbness or tingling is progressively bothersome, or there is evidence of weakness or muscle wasting, surgical decompression of the nerve is usually recommended to improve the symptoms or at least stop the problem worsening.

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You are also welcome to provide feedback on iwantgreatcare.org so that we can continue to improve the service we provide.

These notes are intended as a guide and some of the details may vary depending on your individual circumstance and at the discretion of your surgeon.

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