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Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Information Page.](#)

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) occurs when the median nerve, which runs from the forearm into the palm of the hand, becomes pressed or squeezed at the wrist. The carpal tunnel is a narrow, rigid passageway of ligament and bones at the base of the hand that houses the median nerve and the tendons that bend the fingers. The median nerve provides feeling to the palm side of the thumb and to most of the fingers. Symptoms usually start gradually, with numbness, tingling, weakness, and sometimes pain in the hand and wrist. CTS makes it difficult for some people to drive, read a book, grasp small objects, or do other tasks. Sometimes no direct cause of CTS can be found; contributing factors include trauma or injury to the wrist that causes swelling, as well as thyroid disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and fluid retention during pregnancy. Women are three times more likely than men to develop carpal tunnel syndrome. The disorder usually occurs only in adults.