

Title: Surgical intervention versus Steroid Injections for Treatment of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

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Abstract: Surgical treatment is more effective than a single local steroid injection in relieving symptomatic pain and improving the symptoms in patients with mild-to-moderate carpal tunnel syndrome. Strength of recommendation: B

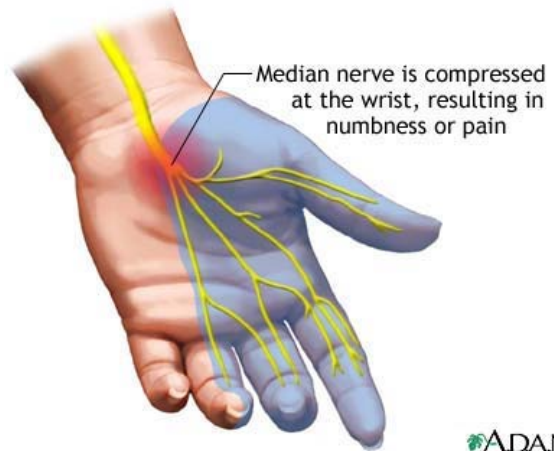
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## Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:



- **How common is CTS?**
  - In 1998, three in 10,000 people were diagnosed: that's approximately 30,000 people per year.
- **What are the symptoms?**
  - Pain and numbness in the outer (thumb) side of your hand.
- **What causes CTS?**
  - Repetitive motion, such as typing, can compress a nerve that gives feeling to part of your hand. This causes inflammation and pain.

### Is Surgery the Right Option for You?

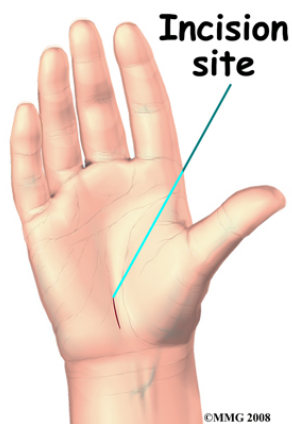


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<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/imagepages/1081.htm>

## Treatment of CTS:

- **What are my options?**
  - One is splinting and physical therapy. This, however, has not been shown to be better than surgery.
  - Another is an injection of steroids at the site of the nerve. This reduces inflammation and help in mild cases.
  - **The latest research, however, shows that surgery is the most effective treatment.**



A small incision is made in the palm to release pressure on the irritated nerve. ([http://www.eorthopod.com/public/patient\\_education/6564/carpal\\_tunnel\\_syndrome.html](http://www.eorthopod.com/public/patient_education/6564/carpal_tunnel_syndrome.html))

## Surgery Versus Steroid Injections: Risks and Benefits

- **What are the risks of surgery?**
  - The surgery is very safe. Complications, such as infection, are rare.
- **What are the benefits of surgery?**
  - A recent study has shown that surgical treatment reduces symptoms and improves quality of life when compared to steroid injections.
- **Is there any benefit to steroid injections if I don't want surgery?**
  - Yes, but only in the short-term. At twenty weeks after steroid injections, most patients have symptoms again. At twenty weeks after surgery, most patients had greatly reduced symptoms.

## **Bottom Line:**

- **Surgery is the best option for reducing symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome.**
- **Surgery can also be done with a small camera and no noticeable incision, so no scars to worry about.**
- **Why live in constant pain? Carpal tunnel surgery is safe, effective, and a same-day procedure.**

### References:

Hui AC et al., "A Randomized Controlled Trial of Surgery versus Steroid Injection for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome." Neurology, 2005; June 2008;62(12);2074-8