

Patient Information Leaflet:

Carpal Tunnel Decompression

Introduction

This leaflet provides information about carpal tunnel decompression, a surgical procedure to treat carpal tunnel syndrome. It is designed to help you understand the procedure, what to expect before, during, and after surgery, and potential complications.

The Procedure

Carpal tunnel decompression is a surgical procedure involving creating a small incision on the wrist and dividing the ligament that is pressing on the median nerve. This creates more space for the nerve.

Anaesthesia

The procedure is usually performed under local anaesthesia, numbing your hand. You will feel a small prick when the injection is given, but you will not feel pain during the procedure. You will be able to move your fingers and hand during the procedure. We also use a tourniquet on the upper arm which is inflated just before the skin incision.

Before Surgery

You will **need to have a nerve conduction study** before surgery. Normally you do not need to see an anaesthetist or have blood tests.

The Operation

The surgery typically takes about 30 minutes.

After Surgery

You will be able to go home on the same day. You may have mild pain and swelling in your hand. You should keep your hand elevated in the sling provided for the first week. The bandage applied after surgery can be removed after 48 hours, but the wound should remain covered with a waterproof dressing until the stitches are removed 14 days after surgery. Physical therapy may be beneficial for regaining hand strength and mobility.

Potential Complications

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Nerve damage
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Full recovery can take up to 12 months.

In some cases, if the nerve has been compressed for a long time, it may not fully recover. If this happens, we may need to examine other areas of the arm and neck to see if the nerve is affected higher up.

Conclusion

This leaflet provides general information about carpal tunnel decompression. It is essential to discuss your specific situation with your surgeon. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have.

Note: This leaflet is for informational purposes only and should not replace professional medical advice.