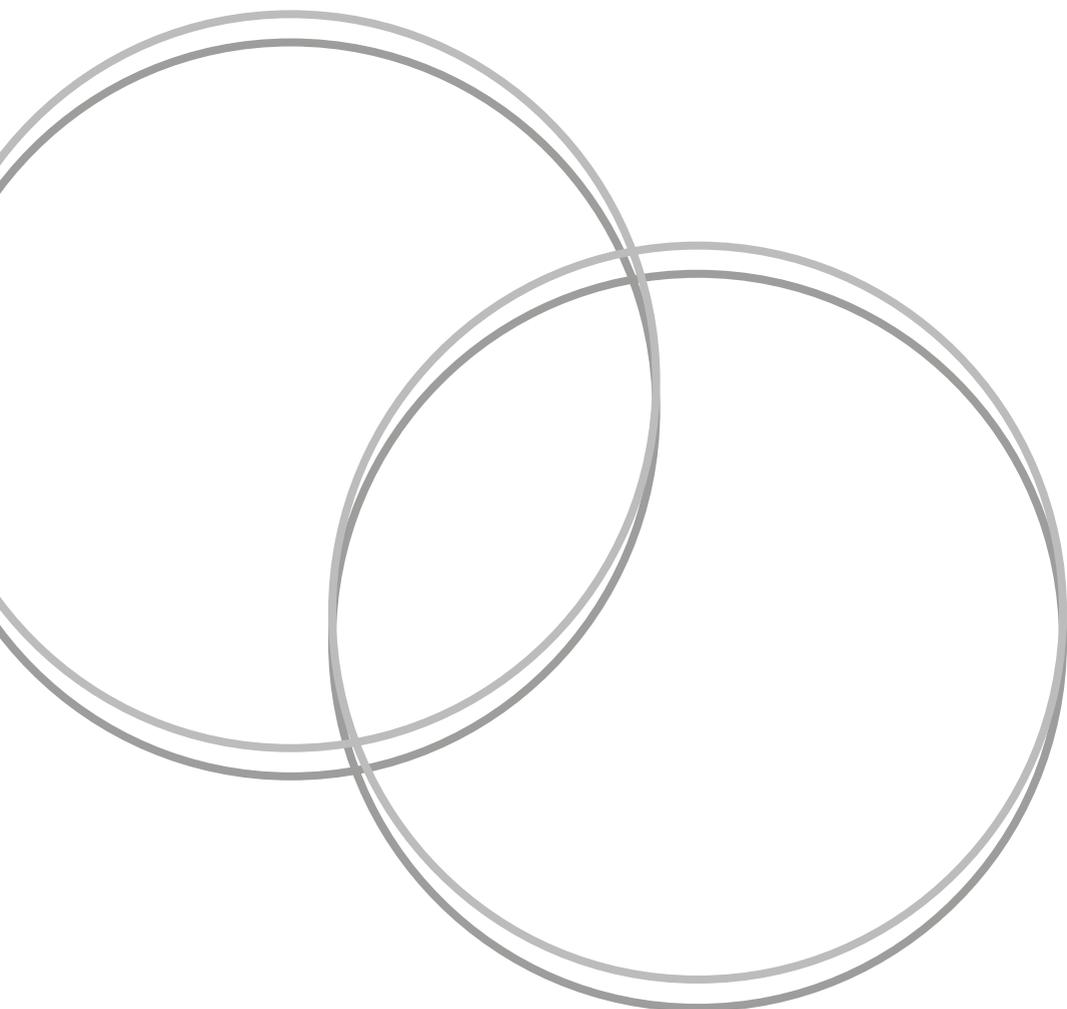




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Carpal tunnel surgery

**Information before your carpal  
tunnel release operation**



## Who is this leaflet for?

Carpal tunnel syndrome occurs due to pressure on a nerve in your wrist. It can cause numbness and a tingling sensation in the thumb, index and middle fingers, pain, a feeling of clumsiness in the hand and night symptoms. This is initially treated with splintage, therapy and a steroid injection. If symptoms recur or persist, an operation is performed under local anaesthesia to relieve pressure on the nerve.

## Preparing for your operation

Please visit your local pharmacy or supermarket and buy **2 boxes of Paracetamol** and keep these safe at home for use after your operation. If you have an allergy to Paracetamol, please speak to your GP or local pharmacist about alternative pain relief medicines you can use.

You should **take off all rings** and jewellery from your hand, and keep these safe at home.

## On the day of your operation

This operation is a **day-case procedure**, so you will be able to go home on the same day. You will not be able to drive yourself, so ensure you have **someone to pick you up** after the operation.

The operation is done using a local anaesthetic injection to numb the hand so that it is not a painful operation. You will not be put to sleep so **you can eat and drink** before your operation.

After you have been checked-in by a nurse, a doctor from the team will come to talk to you to be sure you understand what is going to happen and to **answer any questions**. They will also **draw an arrow on your arm** to confirm which hand is being operated on.

## Local anaesthetic injection

Before your operation a doctor will inject some local anaesthetic medicine into your hand. Enough local anaesthetic will be administered **to be sure that the operation does not hurt. A very thin needle will be used**, and the **sting** of local anaesthetic settles within a few seconds.

The local anaesthetic is mixed with some **adrenaline** (a medicine to minimise bleeding to avoid the need to use a tourniquet) which makes the skin pale; this is normal. The skin of your palm will be **numb** and sometimes your fingers may also feel numb. Before starting the operation the doctor will check to make sure the local anaesthetic is working. This can be topped up if necessary.

If you have ever had a **bad reaction or allergy** to any local anaesthetic injections, you should tell the doctor before they start. After the local anaesthetic has been injected, you should gently **massage** your palm and wrist for a few minutes. This is to encourage the mixture to spread around the area and to reduce swelling.

## The operation

A member of staff will bring you to the **operating theatre**. In the operating theatre the surgical **team** will greet you and go through some **safety checklists**.

You will be **awake** during the operation and a member of staff can sit beside you to keep you company. You will be lying flat on your back on the operating bed with a blanket to keep you warm. Your hand will be resting out on an **arm table** at the side of the bed. We will clean your hand and forearm with a **sterilising solution**. We will use sterile **drapes** to cover the rest of your body and the area we are operating on, so you won't be able to see the operation taking place. It is important that you **do not touch these drapes** with your other hand once they have been set up. During the operation you will feel pressure on your hand which is normal. If you feel any **pain** you should tell the doctor so the local anaesthetic can be topped-up. The operation usually lasts 20 minutes or less. At the end of the operation the wound will be closed with **stitches**. The surgeon will then apply a **dressing** and a **bandage** around the hand and wrist.

## Immediately after your operation

Keep your hand **raised** above the level of your chest. Keep the dressings and bandages clean and dry.

Take regular pain relief medicine during the first 48 hours because the local anaesthetic will wear off. You should take two 500mg tablets of **Paracetamol**, four times per day unless you are told otherwise.)

**Ensure somebody can take you home** after the operation; you will not be able to drive for 2 weeks.

# Contact us

## Upper Limb Team

Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Windmill Road, Headington OX3 7LD.

Telephone number: **01865 737874**



## Further Information

Please speak to the department where you are being seen if you would like an interpreter. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter. Please also ask them if you would like this information leaflet in another format, such as:

- easy read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronically
- in another language.

We have tried to make this information meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They will be happy to help.

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