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Treatment Options for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is a common disease where a nerve in the hand becomes pinched. Typical symptoms are numbness or tingling in the hand. Patients often complain about waking up at night because of this. The diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome is often clear after examination by a hand specialist. A good history and physical examination is often all that is needed to make the diagnosis.

However, if the diagnosis is not obvious, a nerve conduction test may be necessary. This exam is to see if the nerve is pinched and if there is any muscle damage present. When diagnosed properly, carpal tunnel syndrome can be treated effectively, with little down time. Below are the three common treatment options.

Splinting

Splinting is often recommended in the early stages of the disease. Wearing a splint at night can sometimes help people sleep better. The splint does not usually cure the disease.

Steroid Injection

A second treatment option is steroid injections. The injection of a steroid into the area around the nerve helps to shrink the structures around the nerve, resulting in less pressure on the nerve. The steroid injection is done in the office and has a low risk of side effects. Patients can be managed with this treatment until their symptoms worsen.

Surgery

Surgery is recommended in moderate to severe cases of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. The surgery is designed to make more room for the nerve and to relieve the symptoms. Carpal tunnel release is a short surgical procedure which, when done properly, offers consistently good results. Typically, there is no splint or cast, and patients are encouraged to start moving their fingers shortly after surgery. Patients typically get quick symptom relief and are able to resume their daily activities soon after surgery.



People often have the misconception that carpal tunnel release surgery is ineffective and requires a long and unpredictable recovery. On the contrary, when diagnosed and treated properly, Carpal tunnel syndrome can be cured with minimal side effects and little down time.

The surgery is a short procedure with minimal side effects



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