

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME



Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is a condition in which the median nerve is compressed at the wrist, leading to pain, numbness and tingling, and muscle weakness in the forearm and hand. A form of compressive neuropathy, CTS is more common in women than it is in men and has a peak incidence around age 42, though it can occur at any age. It can vary in severity from mild discomfort to debilitating, sometimes making it difficult to use the affected hand.

Repetitive activities are often blamed for the development of CTS, although in many cases the cause is unknown. Common medical treatment includes pain-relief medication, anti-inflammatories, and surgery in stubborn cases.

More and more evidence points to another cause of CTS: nerve compression or interference in the cervical spine. More and more researchers point to the “double crush syndrome”, in which nerve compression is found in both the cervical spine and the wrist. A study published in the medical journal *The Lancet* reported that 67% to 75% of patients who had CTS also had nerve root irritation in the spine! What does that mean? It means that if you only treat the wrist for CTS, you are likely missing half the problem. That could be why you are not getting better!

A competent chiropractor will find out if the nerves are compressed in the spine and/or the wrist and provide the required adjustments to allow the nerves to function better. In many cases, the CTS will resolve. A study published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* showed significant improvement in perceived comfort and function, nerve conduction and finger sensation overall, with chiropractic management. This and more studies are available for your viewing at <http://www.icpa4kids.org/research/chiropractic/carpal.htm>.

Other recommendations for CTS patients include supplementing vitamin B6, and wearing wrist braces at night to avoid bending the wrists and causing more compression.

Please call our office if you have any questions or if you would like a consultation.

Dr. Liana Harper and Dr. Pierre Gaulin are in private practice in Coaldale, and are the proud parents of two healthy children. They can be reached at

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Disclaimer: The above represents the opinion of the authors, based on extensive research and years of clinical practice. It is not intended for self-diagnosis and treatment. Please consult a health care professional as your specific condition might require different recommendations.