

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS): An In-Depth Guide to Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is a common condition that affects the hand and wrist. It occurs when the median nerve, which runs through the carpal tunnel in the wrist, becomes compressed. The carpal tunnel is a narrow passageway surrounded by bones and ligaments. When the median nerve is compressed, it can cause pain, numbness, and tingling in the hand and wrist.

CTS is a common condition, affecting up to 10% of the population. It is more common in women than men and typically occurs between the ages of 30 and 60.



Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, CTS explained. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome causes, symptoms, treatment, exercises, management, therapies and prevention.

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Causes of CTS

CTS can be caused by a variety of factors, including:

* **Repetitive motions:** Repetitive motions that involve the use of the hands and wrists, such as typing, knitting, or playing the guitar, can increase the risk of CTS. * **Underlying medical conditions:** Certain underlying medical conditions, such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and hypothyroidism, can increase the risk of CTS. * **Pregnancy:** Pregnancy can cause fluid retention, which can put pressure on the median nerve and lead to CTS. * **Fractures or dislocations:** Fractures or dislocations of the wrist can damage the median nerve and lead to CTS. * **Obesity:** Obesity can increase the risk of CTS because it can put pressure on the median nerve.

Symptoms of CTS

The symptoms of CTS can vary depending on the severity of the condition. Common symptoms include:

* **Pain:** Pain in the hand and wrist is the most common symptom of CTS. The pain may be sharp, burning, or aching. It may worsen with repetitive motions or at night. * **Numbness:** Numbness in the hand and wrist is another common symptom of CTS. The numbness may be constant or intermittent. It may also affect the fingers, especially the thumb, index finger, and middle finger. * **Tingling:** Tingling in the hand and wrist is a common symptom of CTS. The tingling may be described as pins and needles or burning. It may also affect the fingers, especially the thumb, index finger, and middle finger. * **Weakness:** Weakness in the hand and wrist is a less common symptom of CTS. The weakness may make it difficult to grip objects or perform fine motor tasks.

Diagnosis of CTS

CTS can be diagnosed with a physical examination and a nerve conduction study. A physical examination can reveal tenderness over the carpal tunnel

and weakness in the hands. A nerve conduction study can measure the electrical activity of the median nerve and help to confirm the diagnosis of CTS.

Treatment of CTS

The treatment for CTS depends on the severity of the condition. Non-surgical treatments may include:

* **Activity modification:** Avoiding repetitive motions that aggravate the symptoms of CTS can help to relieve pain and numbness. * **Splinting:** Wearing a splint at night can help to keep the wrist in a neutral position and reduce pressure on the median nerve. * **Corticosteroid injections:** Corticosteroid injections can help to reduce inflammation and pain in the carpal tunnel. * **Physical therapy:** Physical therapy can help to improve range of motion in the wrist and strengthen the muscles that support the wrist.

If non-surgical treatments do not provide relief, surgery may be necessary. Surgery involves releasing the carpal tunnel by cutting the ligament that forms the roof of the tunnel. This can relieve pressure on the median nerve and improve symptoms.

Prevention of CTS

There are a number of things that you can do to prevent CTS, including:

* **Avoid repetitive motions:** Avoid repetitive motions that involve the use of the hands and wrists, such as typing, knitting, or playing the guitar. If you must perform repetitive motions, take frequent breaks and stretch your hands and wrists. * **Strengthen the muscles in your hands and wrists:**

Strengthening the muscles in your hands and wrists can help to support the wrist and reduce the risk of CTS. * **Maintain a healthy weight:** Obesity can increase the risk of CTS, so maintaining a healthy weight can help to reduce your risk. * **Treat underlying medical conditions:** If you have an underlying medical condition, such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, or hypothyroidism, treating the condition can help to reduce your risk of CTS.

CTS is a common condition that can cause pain, numbness, and tingling in the hand and wrist. It is caused by compression of the median nerve in the carpal tunnel. Treatment for CTS depends on the severity of the condition and may include non-surgical treatments such as activity modification, splinting, corticosteroid injections, and physical therapy. If non-surgical treatments do not provide relief, surgery may be necessary.



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