



## **Common Sense in Medicine**

**This information is based on patient interaction of over twenty-five years in the Dallas office of Dr. David Hubler M.D. Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon**

### **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**

It seems that everyone has heard of carpal tunnel syndrome, but don't know what it is or what causes it.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is the name for the hand pain and numbness caused by pressure on the median nerve as it runs through the carpal tunnel. The carpal tunnel is a short tunnel at the wrist created by a channel of small wrist bones below and a ligament across the top. The pain can extend to the wrist, elbow and shoulder.

People frequently wake up at night or in the morning with their hands hurting and their fingers numb. They may get relief by shaking or rubbing their hands or hanging them down over the bed.

The syndrome is caused by an activity or position in which the hand is cupped for prolonged periods of time. This allows for the ligament that runs across the wrist to shorten and squeeze on the median nerve under it. It is made worse by vibration and repetitive activities.

The best way to prevent the problem is to stretch the hand as wide as possible

many times a day while under hot running water. During the day it is important to change the way things are done so their hands are not tightly closed. Wearing a wrist splint at night will keep people from closing their hands too tightly while they sleep.

If the numbness is allowed to persist, it may become permanent. If numbness or pain is severe, then surgery is done to relieve the pressure on the nerve. Day surgery using a one-half inch incision can now be done with return to most activities in one or two days. After surgery, it is important to do stretching exercises to prevent recurrence.

Since carpal tunnel syndrome is from pressure from a tight ligament, common sense tells us that relief is achieved by stretching or surgically releasing the ligament.

### **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome By David Hubler MD**

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