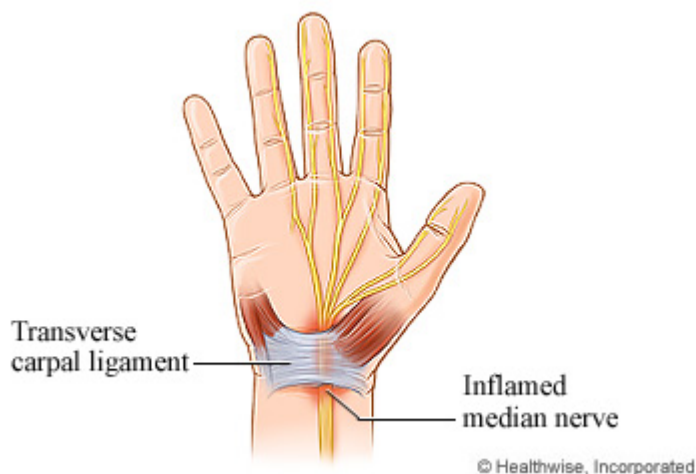


Carpal Tunnel Release: Before Your Surgery



What is carpal tunnel release?

Carpal tunnel surgery reduces the pressure on a nerve in the wrist. Your doctor will cut a ligament that presses on the nerve. This lets the nerve pass freely through the tunnel without being squeezed. This is also called carpal tunnel release surgery.

The surgery can be open or endoscopic. In open surgery, your doctor makes a small cut in the palm of your hand. This cut is called an incision. In endoscopic surgery, your doctor makes one small incision in the wrist. Or you may have one small incision in the wrist and one in the palm. Your doctor puts a thin tube with a camera attached (endoscope) into the incision. Surgical tools are put in along with the endoscope.

In both types of surgeries, the incisions are closed with stitches. The incisions leave scars that usually fade in time.

You may be asleep during the surgery. Or you may be awake and have medicine to numb your hand and arm so you won't feel pain.

After surgery, your wrist and hand pain should start to go away. It usually takes 3 to 4 months to recover and 1 year before your hand strength returns. How much hand strength returns is different for each person.

You will go home the same day as the surgery. When you can go back to work depends on the type of work you do.

How do you prepare for surgery?

Surgery can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for surgery.



Preparing for surgery

- Be sure you have someone to take you home. Anesthesia and pain medicine will make it unsafe for you to drive or get home on your own.
- Understand exactly what surgery is planned, along with the risks, benefits, and other options.
- Tell your doctor ALL the medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take. Some may increase the risk of problems during your surgery. Your doctor will tell you if you should stop taking any of them before the surgery and how soon to do it.
- If you take a medicine that prevents blood clots, your doctor may tell you to stop taking it before your surgery. Or your doctor may tell you to keep taking it. (These medicines include aspirin and other blood thinners.) Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Make sure your doctor and the hospital have a copy of your advance directive. If you don't have one, you may want to prepare one. It lets others know your health care wishes. It's a good thing to have before any type of surgery or procedure.

What happens on the day of surgery?



- Follow the instructions exactly about when to stop eating and drinking. If you don't, your surgery may be canceled. If your doctor told you to take your medicines on the day of surgery, take them with only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your surgery. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Do not shave the surgical site yourself.
- Take off all jewelry and piercings. And take out contact lenses, if you wear them.

At the hospital or surgery center



- Bring a picture ID.
- The area for surgery is often marked to make sure there are no errors.
- You will be kept comfortable and safe by your anesthesia provider. The anesthesia may make you sleep. Or it may just numb the area being worked on.
- The surgery will take about 15 to 60 minutes.

When should you call your doctor?



- You have questions or concerns.
- You don't understand how to prepare for your surgery.
- You become ill before the surgery (such as fever, flu, or a cold).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the surgery.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **X027** in the search box to learn more about "**Carpal Tunnel Release: Before Your Surgery**".

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