**Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**

What do you need to know?

**WHAT IS CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME (CTS)?**

- CTS is the compression of the median nerve at the wrist as it passes into the hand from the forearm. The Carpal Tunnel is a narrow ridge of ligaments and bone through which nerves, tendons and blood vessels pass into the hand. Thickening of the tendons or swelling within the tunnel and/or surrounding structures can cause compression of the nerve causing symptoms.

  **It is more common in women than men and tends to occur mostly within the age range of 45-64 years of age.** However, this trend is changing as there are younger persons being affected by this condition. Office workers using the computer are commonly affected.

**Symptoms include:**

- Pain at the wrist and/or hand and sometimes up the entire hand
- Numbness in the fingers
- Weakness in grip strength

**Physiotherapy treatments for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**

Physiotherapy management begins after you’re assessed, which includes history of complaints, physical assessment of the hand(s) & other joints. Management may include:

- Modalities: ice, ultrasound, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS)
  - Custom made splints
  - Ergonomic Evaluations of workstations
  - Exercise

**SELF HELP TIPS**

a. Computer users: take frequent breaks to rest and gently stretch the wrist and fingers

b. Arrange your workstation in an ergonomically friendly manner

c. Try to maintain a healthy lifestyle to reduce the risk of arthritis, diabetes (which can cause nerve problems in the long run), and weight gain (which can cause unwanted stress on the joints and associated structures)

d. Maintain proper body mechanics; e.g. Ensure objects are within close range to avoid overstretching and holding objects awkwardly

**Exercise**, if done properly, and under the direction of a physiotherapist, can decrease your pain and help you return to your regular day to day activities!

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