

MIKE FOSTER

Hand Wrist and Elbow

Carpal Tunnel Protocol

Problem

- Numbness and tingling affecting the thumb, index, middle and ring fingers

Cause

- Compression of the median nerve as it passes through the carpal tunnel at the level of the wrist.

Diagnosis

- Characteristic night time waking with numbness
- Characteristic distribution of numbness in the hand
- Sometimes wasting of the thenar (thumb) muscles in the hand
- Positive Tinnels (tapping) and Phalens (compression tests)
- Nerve Conduction Tests can confirm the diagnosis if needed.

Treatment

- Non Op
 - Night splinting
 - Steroid injection for temporary relief
- Op
 - Open – LA with sedation or GA
 - 4cm Incision
 - Release of the transverse carpal ligament
 - Skin Closure
- Endoscopic - GA
 - Using an endoscope to divide the ligament between the smaller incisions
 - Same long term results as open
 - Slightly earlier return to work than Open
 - Bilateral procedure possible

Potential Complications

- Infection, Haematoma
- Wound sensitivity
- Pillar pain (thenar and hyperthenar areas)
- CRPs (exaggerated pain response from the nerves)

Post Op Care

- Day surgery
- Keep fingers moving, - elevation
- Debulk bandage at 5 days
- Return to desk work at 10 days.
- Return to manual work at one month.
- Return to Heavy work at three months.