

# Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Median nerve 'entrapment neuropathy' caused by compression of the median nerve in the carpal tunnel.

## Clinical features

- Intermittent paresthesia, pain/burning and numbness of thumb, first, middle and radial half of ring finger
- Loss of strength and wasting of the thenar eminence
- Symptoms often worse at night
- Phalen's sign +ve
- Tinnel's test +ve

## Causes

- Idiopathic
- Pregnancy
- Obesity
- Local extrinsic pressure e.g. ganglion, lipoma
- Endocrine causes
  - Diabetes
  - Hypothyroidism
  - Acromegaly

## Differentials

- Thoracic outlet syndrome
- Pronator syndrome

## Management

Spontaneous resolution occurs in 25% over 1 year

- Conservative
  - Watch and wait
  - Wrist splint (especially at night)
  - Steroid injection (used rarely)
  - NSAIDs may help
- Surgery
  - Carpal tunnel release (cut ligament over front of wrist under local anaesthesia) – recurrence rare



Carpal tunnel release scar