

Orthopaedics – Carpal Tunnel Release

Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

Guidance for Patients

Whilst you are waiting for your carpal tunnel surgery, stop or cut down on anything that causes you to frequently bend your wrist or grip hard, such as using vibrating tools for work or playing an instrument.

A wrist splint can help relieve pain and will keep your wrist straight. It helps to relieve pressure on the nerve. You may choose to wear it at night while you sleep. You'll have to wear a splint for at least 4 weeks before it starts to feel better. You can buy wrist splints online or from pharmacies.

Painkillers like [paracetamol](#) or [ibuprofen](#) may help carpal tunnel pain short-term, but there is little evidence to say they can treat the cause of CTS, so it is important not to rely on them.

It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as medically fit and active as possible.

If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes you should get this reviewed at your doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping. Alcohol consumption should be within accepted limits.

You should continue to take your prescribed medications and only stop after consultation with your GP.

It is recommended that you take regular exercise (20 minutes per day until you are short of breath, increasing a bit at a time). Take a brisk walk or consider an exercise bike.

Support is available at **Healthy Cornwall** to help you with:

- Weight management
- Healthy eating
- Stopping smoking
- Physical activity

Contact **Healthy Cornwall** at:

- Telephone - 01209 61500
- Email – healthy.cornwall@cornwall.gov.uk
- Website – www.healthycornwall.org.uk

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Good Mental Health

There are many ways you can keep your mental health fit and well, just as you would your physical health.

Support is available at [Mental health - NHS Kernow CCG - NHS Kernow CCG](#)

Other Useful Information

Further links which may help you manage your condition whilst you await treatment:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/>

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you are concerned that your condition or symptoms are deteriorating since you were referred to us, please contact the Planned Care Patient Support Team on 0800 0357777. You will be asked to detail the changes in your condition/symptoms since seeing your GP at the time you were referred or following listing for surgery, and this will be passed to the clinical team will re-assess your priority.

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

Contact Us

Email: rch-tr.accessteam@nhs.net

Telephone: 01872 255084