

Your Journey with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome



For more information scan this QR code or go to myhealth.alberta.ca/carpal-tunnel-syndrome-pathway

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common condition that affects one of the nerves (median nerve) in your hand and wrist. Pressure on median nerve within the carpal tunnel may result in pain, burning, numbness, tingling, and/or weakness in your hand and wrist. You are the most important part of your healthcare team. This guide will help you to know what to expect as you work with your team to manage and treat your carpal tunnel syndrome. If you have any questions along the way, please ask your team. Click on the page numbers in blue if you want more information about the step in your journey.

Before your appointment ([page 6](#))

- Write down how you feel, your symptoms, and any questions or concerns.
- Write down things that you find make your symptoms better and worse, and what you have tried to manage your symptoms.
- Consider bringing a family member or friend to support you.



Visit your healthcare provider ([page 7](#))

- Share all of your symptoms and concerns. Your health includes physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and social elements.
- In order to better manage your health condition, your healthcare provider needs to hear from you and understand who you are and what matters to you.
- During your visit with your healthcare provider, they may use tests like Tinel's sign, Phalen's test, and Durkan's test to see if and where symptoms happen.



Get your tests ([page 10](#))

- Some people may be sent for electrodiagnostic studies or an ultrasound.



Review your test results ([page 11](#))

- If blood work is ordered to assess for other conditions, you may find your results on MyHealth Records or MyChart (myhealth.alberta.ca/myhealthrecords or ahs.ca/mychart).
- You can ask your healthcare provider to share your results with you (for example, electrodiagnostic study results).



Review your treatment & management options ([page 12](#))

- Explore the different treatment options:
 - Wrist splints
 - Changes to your activities
 - Steroid injections
- You and your healthcare provider may decide that you should think about having surgery for your carpal tunnel syndrome.
- Decide what will work best for you.



Talk with your healthcare provider about a referral ([page 15](#))

- Non-surgical options (for example, splints, activity modification) are usually tried first to see if they help with your symptoms.
- Referral to a specialist is based on your symptoms, impacts on your day-to-day life, how you respond to non-surgical treatment, and your test results.



Start your treatment & watch your symptoms ([page 16](#))

- Take an active role in your treatment.
- Write down any changes you notice in your symptoms.
- Pay attention to worsening numbness/tingling/pain in your hand/fingers, and if you experience increased difficulty using your hand (for example, doing up buttons, holding a fork, etc.).



Keep taking care of yourself ([page 17](#))

- Keep taking care of your overall health.
- Look for other healthy lifestyle resources and supports.



Whole-person health
([page 2](#))

Important Tips:

Need to connect with a primary care clinic?

ahs.ca/findadoctor

Need a translator or interpreter? Let your healthcare provider know

Need health advice?
Call Health Link at 811

Need to find programs and resources in your community?
Call 211 or visit ab.211.ca



Primary Care
Alberta

How to use this resource

The information provided in this resource is based on validated evidence from a variety of sources, including healthcare professionals in Alberta, peer-reviewed journals, current clinical guidelines, validated patient resources, and specialty care recommendations. It is intended as general health information and should not replace the clinical judgment or advice of a qualified healthcare provider. This resource does not address the unique needs of individual patients. Always consult with your healthcare team and follow their recommendations for your specific care.

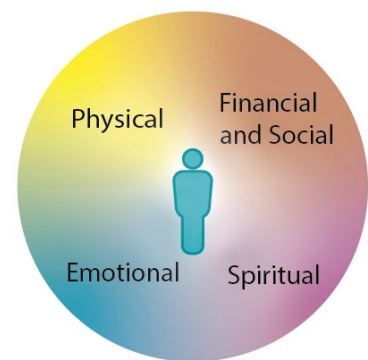
These pages are for you to use as needed. You can look through all of them at once or just the ones that help you now. Feel free to come back to the resource whenever you need it.

Whole-person health

The whole-person health approach will help you and your healthcare team better manage your health condition. It is drawn from the teachings of the medicine wheel.

Whole-person health means thinking about all parts of your health and wellness: physical, financial and social, spiritual, and emotional. All of these parts are connected and influence each other. It's important to be aware of your personal needs in each part and to share that information with your healthcare team.

- **Physical:** your specific health conditions and how well your body works
- **Financial and Social:** your ability to meet your housing, transportation, food, and health needs, feeling supported to manage your daily life, and having meaningful relationships
- **Spiritual:** your beliefs, sense of connection, and purpose
- **Emotional:** how you think, feel, and cope with life events



Whole-person health

Whole-person health also reminds us that we are all connected and work together: you, your support systems, and your healthcare providers. Your healthcare providers could be your doctor, nurse practitioner, or a team that comes together with you to plan and organize your care.

Your healthcare provider needs to understand who you are and what matters to you. This helps to build trust. But it can be hard to know what to share or what to say. Try starting by asking yourself:

“What are the things in my life that are important to me?”

“What are the things in my life that may be affecting my health and well-being?”



Bringing forward what matters to you is important. Here are some examples of things you may want to talk about with your healthcare provider:

Physical

“My symptoms are making it hard for me to do my job.”

“Because of my pain and how hard it is for me to move around, it’s hard to take care of myself.”

Financial and Social

“I’m worried I won’t be able to get to all of my appointments.”

“I need my daughter with me as a translator.”

“I’m not sure how I will pay for my medications this month.”

Emotional

“I’m lonely and have no one to talk to.”

“I have a lot of stress and I’m not sure how to manage it.”

“Ever since my friend died, I’ve been struggling with my feelings.”

Spiritual

“It’s important that I follow traditional healing practices.”

“How can I include my culture’s foods and family recipes in my nutrition plan?”

“It’s important that my religious practice of fasting is respected and brought into my care.”

What is carpal tunnel syndrome?

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common condition that affects one of the nerves (median nerve) in your hand and wrist. The median nerve travels from your forearm to your hand and part of the nerve passes through the carpal tunnel (made up of bones and ligaments on the palm side of your hand). Pressure on median nerve within the carpal tunnel may result in pain, burning, numbness, tingling, and/or weakness in the hand and arm (Figure 1). Usually, symptoms are felt in the thumb, index finger, middle finger and part of the ring finger (not in the little finger). The median nerve also supplies the thenar muscles (muscles at the base of the thumb) and in cases of more severe carpal tunnel syndrome, the thenar muscles can get weaker and smaller (Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 1: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

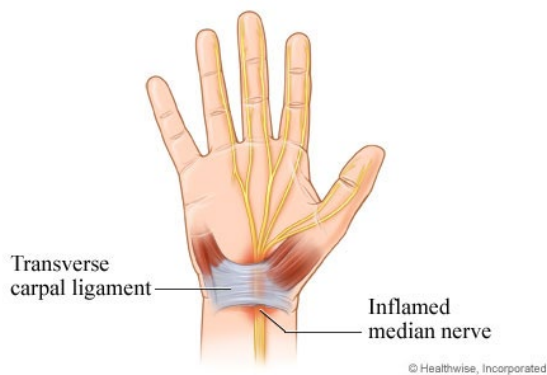


Figure 2: Areas supplied by the median nerve. The median nerve supplies feeling to the skin of the thumb, index finger, middle finger, and half of the ring finger. The median nerve also supplies the thenar muscles which enable you to move your thumbs.

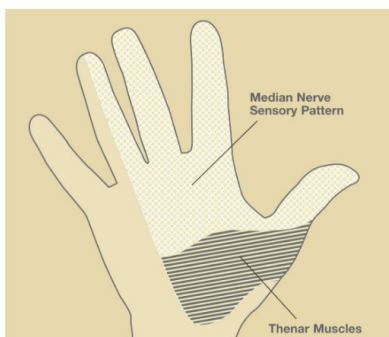


Image from American Society for Surgery of the Hand

Figure 3: Thenar muscles and severe carpal tunnel syndrome. Note that the thumb muscles in the palm of the right hand are shrunk.



Image from e-hand: The Electronic Textbook of Hand Surgery

There are a few factors that can make a person more likely to develop carpal tunnel syndrome. For example:

- Women are more likely to develop carpal tunnel syndrome than men
- Risk of carpal tunnel syndrome increases with age
- Having some other medical conditions can increase risk for carpal tunnel syndrome (for example, diabetes, hypothyroidism, and some types of arthritis)
- Pregnancy (symptoms usually go away after delivery)

Symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome may have a small or big impact on things that you do in your day-to-day life. If you notice symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome, it is important that you talk with your healthcare provider as soon as possible so that they can support you to manage the condition. Early intervention can help reverse carpal tunnel syndrome or keep it from getting worse.

Understanding the symptoms that you experience and their impact on your life helps your healthcare team determine whether you have mild, moderate or severe carpal tunnel syndrome.

Mild/Moderate	Severe
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain and tingling in the hand, wrist, and fingers (may also feel symptoms in the arm)• First notice hand and wrist symptoms when you wake in the morning• Symptoms may be experienced on and off (e.g., only during certain activities)• Clumsiness/dropping objects• You may be able to relieve your symptoms by shaking out your hand and wrist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symptoms are constant or occur very often• Symptoms greatly impact your life and the things you can do• Weakness in the hand that affects your ability to do things• Tingling/loss of feeling in hand• Symptoms wake you up at night• Changes in how the muscle at the base of your thumb looks (e.g., muscles get smaller)

Before your appointment

Everyone will have their own unique journey with carpal tunnel syndrome. How you move through your journey, the number of visits with your healthcare team, the steps you will take, and the order you take them in will depend on your individual needs and will be decided in partnership with your healthcare team. Always follow the specific recommendations from your healthcare team.

Here are a few tips to help you get ready for your appointment with your healthcare provider:

- Consider using a symptom tracker to write down important information to share with your healthcare team about your symptom(s).
- A symptom tracker can help you remember what symptom(s) you're feeling, when it started, how often it happens, how long it lasts and what makes it better or worse.
- **Common symptoms you may have with carpal tunnel syndrome are:**
 - **Numbness and tingling in the wrist, hand, and fingers.** These symptoms are often noticed first when you wake up in the morning but may occur at other times as well.
 - **Pain in the wrist, hand, and fingers.**
 - **Having trouble doing fine motor tasks (e.g., doing up your buttons, opening jars).**
 - **Feeling clumsy with your hands (e.g., dropping things).**
- It can sometimes feel uncomfortable to discuss things that one finds difficult to do or can no longer do. This may include tasks like doing up buttons or holding a fork. Your healthcare provider knows it can be hard to talk about these things and they are there to support you. Seeking support early can help make management easier and may help reduce the need for surgery. Your healthcare provider may also recommend that you see an occupational therapist who can support you to complete your day-to-day tasks.
- Write down a list of your questions and concerns. When you're done, read your list and mark the most important things.
- Make a list of the prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medicines you use, including any vitamins, herbs, creams/ointments, and supplements.
- Ask someone you trust to go with you to your appointment. They can help you ask questions, write down instructions, and remember explanations.



Helpful tools and resources

Use a symptom tracker: hqa.ca/symptom-tracker (Health Quality Alberta)

To get the most out of your visit, plan to write notes during the visit or see the Alberta Health Services My Care Conversations app (ahs.ca/careapp) website for more information about recording your conversation with your healthcare provider.



Your healthcare provider will review your history of symptoms and what tends to make your symptoms better and worse. They may ask how often, how long, and how severe your symptoms are. They may also ask how your symptoms impact the things you do every day like taking care of yourself, your job, the things you like to do (e.g., hobbies), and your sleep.

What should I share with my healthcare provider?

- What impact are carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms having on things that are important to you, like your job, hobbies and interests, and relationships?
- What activities make your carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms worse?
- What has worked for you in the past to manage your carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms?
- There are many conditions that may contribute to carpal tunnel syndrome (e.g., diabetes, arthritis, hypothyroidism). Talking with your healthcare provider about your overall health is important. This will help your healthcare provider identify and manage any other conditions which may help with your carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms.
- Let your healthcare provider know if you are pregnant. Carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms are often experienced during pregnancy due to fluid retention (most often during the later stages of pregnancy). Pregnancy related carpal tunnel syndrome usually resolves after pregnancy.
- What types of things help you work better with your healthcare team and what do you expect and need from the relationship with your healthcare provider?

Assessments your healthcare provider may do

There are a few simple assessments that your healthcare team may do to help determine whether you have carpal tunnel syndrome.

Examination of your arm, wrist, and hand

- Your healthcare provider can tell a lot by looking at your arm, wrist, and hand.
- They will look for any injuries, underlying conditions that may be causing your symptoms and any signs that need follow up (e.g., changes in the muscle at the bottom of your thumb).
- Your healthcare provider will ask you about where you feel your symptoms and what impact they have on your life.

Tinel's Sign

- Your healthcare provider will tap firmly on the area on your wrist over the median nerve to see if and where symptoms (e.g., numbness, tingling, pain) occur.
- Your healthcare provider will discuss the test results with you right away.



Phalen's Test

- Your healthcare provider will ask you to put the backs of your hands together (Figure 4). This increases the pressure in the carpal tunnel. They will ask you what symptoms you experience during the test.
- Your healthcare provider will discuss the test results with you right away.

Figure 4: Phalen's Test



Durkan's Test (also known as Carpal Compression Test or Median Compression Test)

- Your healthcare provider will apply pressure over the area on your wrist over the median nerve to see if and where symptoms (e.g., numbness, tingling, pain) occur.
- Your healthcare provider will discuss the test results with you right away.

Figure 5: Durkan's Test



What should I watch for (symptoms of concern)?

Contact your healthcare team if you have:

- Redness and warmth that could indicate infection
- Any symptoms that develop quickly (in less than a week)
- Severe symptoms that don't go away like numbness, pain, or weakness
- Changes in how the muscles in your wrists and hands look

You are the most important part of your healthcare team: If you don't understand what your healthcare team is telling you, let them know right away. Be open and honest.

You might say:

"This is new to me. Could you please explain it slowly, using language that is easier to understand?"

"It sounded like you said that I should... Did I understand that correctly?"

"Can you show me a picture or model to help me understand?"



Helpful tools and resources

- Making the most of your appointment (MyHealth Alberta): myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=hw226888
- Working with your healthcare team: hqa.ca/info (Health Quality Alberta)



Get your tests

You may also need tests to help find the cause of your symptoms, evaluate the severity of your carpal tunnel syndrome, and to rule out other health problems. These may include:

Blood Tests

- Blood tests are not usually ordered for carpal tunnel syndrome.
- Your healthcare provider may ask you to have blood work done to see what may be causing your carpal tunnel syndrome or to rule out other conditions.

Electrodiagnostic Studies

Depending on your symptoms, your healthcare provider may ask you to go for electrodiagnostic studies. Electrodiagnostic studies can help confirm the carpal tunnel syndrome diagnosis, measure how severe your carpal tunnel syndrome is and provide information about how you might respond to surgery. Nerve conduction studies are the primary electrodiagnostic study done for carpal tunnel syndrome.

Nerve conduction studies: Two electrodes are taped to the skin over the wrist and finger and a small electrical current is passed through the median nerve to see how electrical impulses are transmitted in the carpal tunnel. If you have carpal tunnel syndrome, the impulses will be slowed. Although everyone's personal experience may be different, most people report that nerve conduction studies are not too uncomfortable, and the test is very quick. Needles are not usually used in nerve conduction studies.

Ultrasound

Your healthcare provider may ask you to get an ultrasound of your wrist done. The ultrasound allows your healthcare provider to see what the inside of the carpal tunnel looks like and if there might be additional pressure on the median nerve. An ultrasound is a painless test. A gel is placed on the wrist and a device is used to touch and scan the area.



Review your test results

It is important to know what your test results are and what they mean for you personally. Take time to discuss your results with your healthcare provider. Medical terms can be hard to understand. And even common words like “positive” or “negative” might mean something different for medical tests. Ask your healthcare provider for explanations and examples to make sure you fully understand.

You might ask:

“What does this mean for me?”

“Is there a current concern? If so, what is it?”



Helpful tools and resources

See your results and health information using secure online tools. You will need to sign up for an account.

MyHealth Records

See your lab results, immunizations, and some other results with a MyHealth Records account. Sign up at myhealth.alberta.ca/myhealthrecords.

MyChart

See your health information, manage your Alberta Health Services appointments, and interact directly with some members of your healthcare team. Ask your healthcare provider how to access your MyChart account. Learn more at ahs.ca/mychart.





Review your treatment & management options

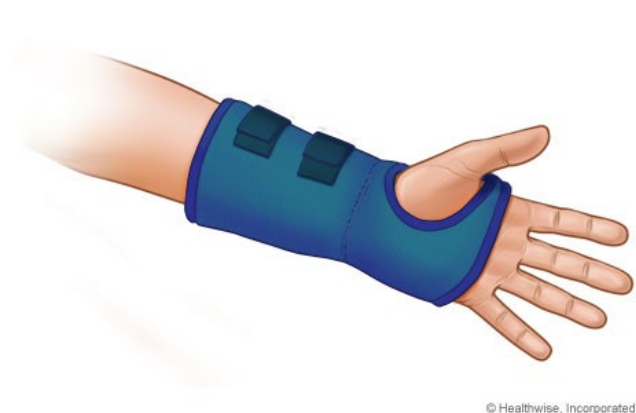
There are a few treatment options available for carpal tunnel syndrome. Many of these treatments can be done at home. For some people, symptoms may resolve in about 6 months (especially if you are under 30 or have not had carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms for very long).

Wrist splints (Figure 6) are often used to help manage carpal tunnel syndrome. Healthcare professionals usually recommend that splints be worn while you are sleeping and when doing activities that make your carpal tunnel symptoms worse. Splints work by supporting the wrist in a neutral position (not bent). It is important that you choose a splint that is long enough to support the wrist in a neutral position. Your healthcare provider may recommend when (e.g., only at night) and how long to wear your splint. Wrist splints can be purchased at the pharmacy and the cost for splints may or may not be covered by private insurance plans. If cost is a concern, talk with your healthcare provider, they may be able to help. Most people do not mind wearing a wrist splint but if the fit and feel of your splint makes it hard for you to wear, let your healthcare provider know as they may have other options available.

Tips about wrist splints:

1. The splint should be about 1/3rd the length of the forearm and should not cover your thumb or fingers.
2. The splint should be comfortable enough to sleep in.
3. The splint should be snug but should not leave red marks on your hand or arm when removed.
4. The wrist splint should feel secure and prevent any wrist movement. You should still be able to move your fingers normally.

Figure 6: Wrist splint



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Changes to your activities

Your healthcare provider will ask you if you notice any activities that make your symptoms worse. You will be asked if you can minimize or eliminate these activities. If you cannot make changes (e.g., the activity is required to care for yourself or for your job), let your healthcare provider know and they may be able to offer additional supports (e.g., use of ergonomic equipment to help support how you do activities) or may change the approach to your treatment.

Steroid injections

Local corticosteroid injections work by decreasing swelling and inflammation. This treatment can help reduce pain and increase your ability to use your hands for a period of time. Steroid injections are most effective when accompanied with lifestyle changes (e.g., stopping/ minimizing activities that increase carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms). Steroid injections can sometimes be done by your primary care provider in their office or you may be referred to a specialist for ultrasound guided steroid injections.

Your healthcare team will monitor how much symptom relief you get from the injection and how long any relief lasts. If symptoms do not improve or return after a single (1) steroid injection, other treatment options should be considered. Patients should not receive more than three carpal tunnel steroid injections in their lifetime as this is unlikely to improve symptoms long term and may delay other treatments leading to more permanent damage.

If you are going for surgery, it is important that you not have a corticosteroid injection for at least a month before your surgery as it may impact your body's ability to heal.

Medications

Medications are not usually used to treat carpal tunnel syndrome as they may cover up symptoms and delay treatment. Sometimes medications are used to help manage pain once a decision has been made that you will be going for surgery. Your healthcare provider may discuss this option with you.

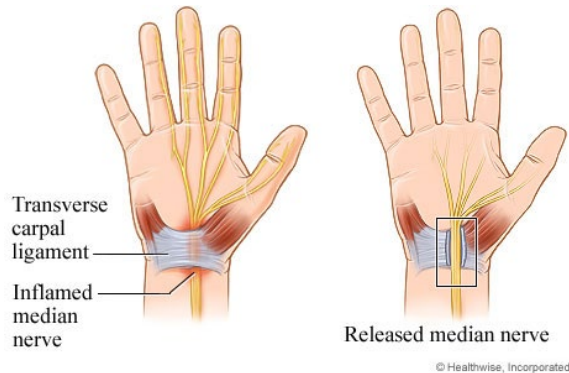
Surgery

You and your healthcare provider may decide that you should consider having surgery to treat your carpal tunnel syndrome. Surgery may be a good consideration if you have had symptoms for a long time, if other treatments haven't helped, if your tests show that you have nerve damage, or if your symptoms impact your day-to-day life significantly.

The surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome is called a 'Carpal Tunnel Release' (Figure 7). This surgery is done to release pressure on the median nerve within the carpal tunnel. During the surgery, the surgeon will cut the ligament that forms the top of the carpal tunnel to release pressure on the median nerve. If you are referred to a surgeon, they will go over what you need to do to prepare for the surgery, what happens during the surgery and what your recovery will look like.

Your recovery: [Carpal Tunnel Release: What to Expect at Home \(myhealth.alberta.ca\)](http://myhealth.alberta.ca)

Figure 7: Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery



Other treatments

The use of alternative therapies have not been proven to effectively treat carpal tunnel syndrome. Alternative therapies may include: Active release therapy, thermal therapy, transcutaneous electrical stimulation, shockwave therapy, low level laser, massage therapy, and acupuncture [1] [2]. In addition:

- Patients often have to pay out-of-pocket for these therapies.
- Relying solely on these treatments to relieve carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms may unnecessarily delay proven medical treatment.
- Delays in accessing proven care can lead to additional irreversible damage to the median nerve.

How to make the right decision for you

Asking the following questions can help you make an informed decision about your different options and decide what will work best for you:

“What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?”

“Can I use any of these options together?”

“How will each option make me feel? Will it have side effects?”

“What results can I expect?”





Talk with your healthcare provider about a referral

Not all patients with carpal tunnel syndrome need a referral to see a specialist. Depending on your symptoms, your history and test results, you may need a referral to a specialist. You can find out more about the referral criteria for a specialist by asking your healthcare provider.

You may be referred for:

- (1) Ultrasound guided steroid injection: You may be referred to a neurologist, physiatrist (also known as a physical and rehabilitation medicine specialist), or radiologist for ultrasound guided steroid injection.
- (2) Electrodiagnostic studies: You may be referred to a physiatrist or neurologist.
- (3) Ultrasound: Diagnostic imaging is usually done at a local clinic.
- (4) Carpal tunnel release surgery: There are a few surgical specialists who can perform a carpal tunnel release. You may be referred to a plastic surgeon, neurosurgeon, orthopedic surgeon or a general surgeon with special training in conditions of the hand and wrist.

At all necessary steps along your journey, your specialist will meet with you to discuss your health concerns and look at your test results. The specialist may diagnose your concern, order more tests, or discuss treatment and management options with you.



Helpful tools and resources

To learn about how to prepare for your specialist appointment, check out the QuRE Patient and Caregiver Journal by visiting ahs.ca/qure.





Start your treatment & watch your symptoms

As you try the treatment options you chose, remember that if something doesn't work the way you thought it would, think about other options and connect with your healthcare provider to find a treatment that will work for you. Your healthcare provider will want to see you regularly (every 8-12 weeks) to see how the treatment is working and if any changes need to be made.

Remember to watch for and let your healthcare provider know right away if you notice:

- Redness and warmth that could indicate infection.
- Any symptoms that develop quickly (in less than a week)
- Severe symptoms that don't go away like numbness, pain, or weakness
- Changes in how the muscles in your wrists and hands look

Watching your symptoms is important. Call your healthcare provider or Health Link at 811 if you have any concerns. You might feel like you don't want to bother your healthcare team, but no detail is too small to share. If it matters to you, it will matter to your healthcare team.

You can clarify with your healthcare team what to expect in terms of follow-up communication. Call your healthcare team whenever you:

- Have questions
- Notice your symptoms getting worse
- Have problems with your medicine
- Haven't gotten test results or heard back about an appointment in the time you had agreed to



Helpful tools and resources

If you can't reach your healthcare provider and need health advice or information, call Health Link anytime, day or night, by dialing **811**.





Keep taking care of yourself

There are many different things that can impact your health and wellness. It is important to be able to work with your healthcare team to decide what is best for you, in your life, given your own unique circumstances as you manage your carpal tunnel syndrome.

Remember, you don't need to do everything all at once. Take realistic and manageable steps in your health and wellness. Consider why making a change may benefit you and the things that matter to you.



Helpful tools and resources

Find programs and resources in your community:

211 connects Albertans to the programs and resources they need, anytime, day or night. Whether you're looking for help with mental health, financial assistance, basic needs or other challenges, 211 is here to help you find supports. It's free, confidential, and available in over 170 languages by phone, making it easy to access help when you need it.

To connect with **211 Alberta**:

- Call 211
- Text INFO to 211
- Chat or search at ab.211.ca

The **Alberta Healthy Living Program** offers free workshops, classes, and supervised exercise and nutrition services to adults living with a variety of chronic conditions and diseases. Many education classes and workshops are available province wide. Learn more by visiting ahs.ca/ahlp.

Chronic Disease Management support: ahs.ca/cdm

Health information & tools: myhealth.alberta.ca/Pages/HealthInfoToolsDefault.aspx



Resources

There's lots of information out there, and it can be confusing to know what information is accurate and true. Here are some great resources that may be helpful for you.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS):

- [CTS: Care Instructions \(myhealth.alberta.ca\)](https://myhealth.alberta.ca)
- [CTS: What is it? Symptoms, Causes, & Treatment | The Hand Society \(assh.org\)](https://assh.org)

Pregnancy and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:

- [Pregnancy: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome \(alberta.ca\)](https://alberta.ca)

Decision making supports:

- [Making a decision about carpal tunnel syndrome \(NHS\)](https://nhs.uk)
- [Carpal tunnel syndrome: Treatment options \(choosingwiselycanada.org\)](https://choosingwiselycanada.org)

Get help now:

- Emergency: Call 911
- Health Link: Call 811

Mental health, addiction, and crisis support:

- 811 or [Addiction Helpline](https://addictionhelpline.ca): 1-866-332-2322
- 811 or [Mental Health Helpline](https://mentalhealthhelpline.ca): 1-877-303-2642
- Crisis Text Line: Text CONNECT to 741741
- Crisis Services Canada: Call 988, or visit talksuicide.ca
- Office of Mental Health Patient Advocates: alberta.ca/office-of-alberta-health-advocates.aspx

Helpful tip

If you can't print this resource at home, ask a family member, friend, or your healthcare provider to print it for you. You can also use a computer and printer at your local library.

Community and social supports:

- 211 Alberta: Call 211, or visit ab.211.ca
- Family Violence Info Line: 310-1818, or visit alberta.ca/family-violence-find-supports.aspx
- Income Support: 1-866-644-5135, or visit alberta.ca/income-support.aspx

Alberta Health Services programs:

- Home Care: ahs.ca/homecare
- Find a Dietitian: ahs.ca/nutrition
 - Health Link has dietitians to answer nutrition questions. Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete the self-referral form on ahs.ca/811.
- Spiritual Care Services: ahs.ca/spiritualcare

Primary care (family doctors):

- Find a doctor or nurse practitioner: ahs.ca/findadoctor
- Virtual care guide: ahs.ca/virtualhealth

Patient concerns and feedback:

- alberta.ca/office-of-alberta-health-advocates.aspx
 - Offers coaching to help you advocate for yourself in the health system, and supports learning how the health system works and how to navigate through it.
- Alberta Health Services Patient Relations: 1-855-550-2555, or visit ahs.ca/patientfeedback

Important phone numbers

Name or clinic name:

Phone number:

Name or clinic name:

Phone number:

Name or clinic name:

Phone number:

Notes

Use this space to take notes.

About this Pathway

The Provincial Pathways Unit co-developed this patient pathway in partnership with patient and family advisors, primary and specialty care providers in Alberta. It is current as of May 2024.

Authors & Conflict of Interest Declaration

This pathway was reviewed and revised by a multi-disciplinary co-design team including plastic surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, neurosurgeons, physiatrists, and primary care providers from across Alberta.

Pathway Review Process

Primary care pathways undergo scheduled review every three years, or earlier if there is a clinically significant change in knowledge or practice. The next scheduled review is May 2027. However, we welcome feedback at any time. Please send your [feedback here](#), or email comments to albertapathways@primarycarealberta.ca.

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Disclaimer

This pathway represents evidence-based best practice but does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to their patients using their own clinical judgment given their patients' specific clinical conditions, in consultation with patients/alternate decision makers. The pathway is not a substitute for clinical judgment or advice of a qualified healthcare professional. It is expected that all users will seek advice of other appropriately qualified and regulated healthcare providers with any issues transcending their specific knowledge, scope of regulated practice or professional competence.

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