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## Comprehensive Neurology and Sleep Medicine, P.A.

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### **Carpal Tunnel**

#### What is carpal tunnel?

Compression of the median nerve that passes through the wrist causing numbness, tingling, and possibly weakness in the hands is called carpal tunnel syndrome. The numbness is usually in the thumb and first 2 fingers. Weakness of the thumbs and ability to grip may also be involved. Some people also experience pain with CTS. The symptoms are most prominent with sleeping, driving, and lifting the hands above shoulder level (such as to talk on the phone or do one's hair). This can be diagnosed through a physical exam and special testing called Nerve conduction testing or EMG.

#### How is it treated?

Conservative treatment for carpal tunnel syndrome involves wearing cock-up wrist splints and taking Vitamin B6 50 mg per day. If possible, you also should avoid repetitive movement of the hands and support your wrists during activities such as typing.

#### How do I get a cock-up wrist splint?

With a prescription you may get a splint for your carpal tunnel at a medical supply store or at some pharmacies. Please note, you may buy a splint without a prescription, but having a prescription will increase the chance that your insurance company will cover the cost of the splint.

#### When should I wear the splint?

Splints should be worn at night for maximum benefit to prevent you from curling your hands in during sleep which causes greater pressure over the median nerve as it passes through the carpal tunnel. You may wear the splints through the day if this makes you more comfortable, but it is not necessary.

#### What if the splints don't help?

Talk with your doctor or health provider. You may need surgery to release the pressure from the median nerve. This relatively simple procedure may be completed by an orthopedic surgeon, a neurosurgeon, or a general surgeon. Recovery time varies from 2-4 weeks depending on the type of surgery you have completed. Details of the surgery should be discussed with your surgeon during your initial consultation.