



Cubital Tunnel

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What is cubital tunnel syndrome?

Cubital tunnel syndrome results when too much pressure on your ulnar nerve, which travels through the inside of your elbow, causes persistent numbness or tingling in your ring and pinky fingers or your forearm. You may also find your hand becomes weaker, and it's more difficult to pick up or hold objects, especially after your elbow is in a bent position for an extended period of time.

These symptoms may be especially noticeable after you've been talking on the telephone or keeping your elbow bent while sleeping.

What causes cubital tunnel syndrome?

The excess pressure on the ulnar nerve can develop over time and be the result of certain movements, such as leaning on your elbows for a period of time. Over time, this pressure may make your arm and fingers feel like they're asleep.

You may also be at increased risk for developing cubital tunnel syndrome because of the structure of your body. For some, structural differences in your anatomy cause the ulnar nerve to frequently move out of place, traveling over the bony area of the elbow. This causes nerve irritation and damage to develop over time.

When do I need surgery for cubital tunnel syndrome?

Sometimes splinting or avoiding pressure on the nerve may help somewhat. But when the pressure on your ulnar nerve becomes severe and your symptoms disrupt your work or other activities, you may need surgery to relieve the compressed nerve.

Dr. Hung assesses your need for surgery based on the main cause of your nerve inflammation. For some, she may need to move the ulnar nerve to the front of your elbow. In other cases, part of the elbow bone may need to be removed to prevent constant nerve irritation.

During your consultation, Dr. Hung evaluates your specific needs to create a custom plan for your surgery. The goal of surgical treatment is to relieve compression on your nerve and alleviate pain, weakness, and functionality issues that result from cubital tunnel syndrome.

If nerve compression is severe, you may still have some of your original symptoms even after surgery. However, surgery can lessen your discomfort and pain, making it easier to perform your work or other activities.