WHAT IS CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME?

- Carpal tunnel syndrome is a painful condition that affects the hands and wrists

WHAT ARE COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

- Numbness and tingling of the hand, fingers
- Pain in wrist, arm
- Weakness in hand

WHAT CAUSES CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME?

- Carpal tunnel is caused by a pinched nerve in the wrist
- Increased pressure on the median nerve in the carpal tunnel
- Disorder may be due to smaller size of carpal tunnel

WHAT INCREASES MY RISK?

- Repetitive tasks, such as assembly line work, computer work
- Medical conditions such as arthritis, alcoholism, diabetes, obesity, pregnancy
- Wrist injuries
- More frequent in women than men

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS?

- If untreated, permanent damage may occur in the hand

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

- Mild symptoms should go away with treatment and will have normal use of hands
- Severe symptoms may require surgery

HOW DO I REDUCE MY RISK?

- There are no specific preventive measures

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

WHAT GENERAL MEASURES SHOULD I TAKE?

- Your healthcare provider will exam your hand and ask about your symptoms
- Activity
  - Exercise regularly to improve fitness
- Diet
  - Eat a well-balanced diet
  - Maintain healthy weight
- To Learn More about your condition:
  - National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), NIH Neurological Institute
    P.O. Box 5801, Bethesda, MD 20824; (800) 352-9424; website: www.ninds.nih.gov/

WHAT ARE COMMON LABS AND TESTS?
• Medical tests may include:
  o X-ray
  o Tests on functioning of the median nerve

WHAT ARE MY TREATMENT OPTIONS?
• Treatment of mild symptoms may include:
  o Resting the hand
  o Using ice on the hand
  o Wearing a splint
• More severe symptoms may require surgery

WHAT MEDICATIONS MAY BE PRESCRIBED?
• Your healthcare provider may recommend:
  o Aspirin or ibuprofen for pain and inflammation
  o Anti-inflammatory drugs or cortisone injections

WHAT CAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE?
• Minimize stress on your hands and wrists
• Rest hands, take breaks from repetitive activities

WHEN SHOULD I SEEK MEDICAL HELP?
• You or a family member has symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome
• If pain, numbness or weakness does not improve

REFERENCES
1. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS); Carpal Tunnel Syndrome; www.ninds.nih.gov; Retrieved January 23, 2013

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