

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR SECONDARY CARE REFERRALS ONLY (to include revision surgery)

Moderation of Risk Factors: Clinicians should consider that there are, on occasion, triggers that may cause a patient to develop this condition e.g., Diabetes, hyperthyroidism, and pregnancy, among others.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common condition that affects the nerves of the hand that may cause pain, numbness and a burning or tingling sensation in the hand and fingers. Symptoms can be intermittent and range from mild to severe.

Patients with intermittent symptoms causing little or no interference with sleep or activities require no treatment and may benefit from practising hand exercises which should help with flexibility.

Referral criteria:

- There is neurological deficit, e.g., Sensory blunting, muscle wasting or weakness of thenar abduction.

OR

- The patient is experiencing significant functional impairment*

AND

- Symptoms persist despite at least 4 months of conservative therapy with at least one local corticosteroid injection administered in primary care and nocturnal splinting (to support the wrist from moving in the night).

Please provide dates of injections with funding request.

*European Hand Guide recommends splinting for 4-12 weeks.

**Significant functional impairment is defined as: • Symptoms preventing the patient fulfilling activities of daily living or conducting vital domestic or carer activities.

Note: CTS occurring in pregnancy often resolves after the baby is born. (The British Society for Surgery of the Hand.

Smoking cessation is recommended for all patients considering the possibility of surgery. For help to quit smoking please contact your local Stop Smoking Service or contact your GP Surgery.

Primary care must obtain funding before referring patients to secondary care providers and secondary care providers must satisfy themselves that the patient has funding secured prior to seeing the patient. This is to ensure inappropriate out-patient appointments are avoided and patient expectations are properly managed.