**Carpal Tunnel Syndrome** – is caused by pressure put on the median nerve that runs through your wrist. Some of the common symptoms are pain, numbness, tingling, and weakness in the hand and wrist. The median nerve affects the movement and sensation in the thumb, index, middle and half of the ring finger. People generally report an increase in their symptoms at night because of the prolonged positioning of their wrist when asleep.

A combination of things over time can lead to carpal tunnel syndrome, but it is often linked to a work- related injury.

**Contributing factors that can lead to carpal tunnel**:

Performing repetitive hand and wrist movements

Prolonged awkward positioning

Obesity

Diabetes

Rheumatoid arthritis

Gout

Fractures

Pregnancy

Swelling

Unusual growths

Smoking

Age

**Things to try at home**:

Rest – avoid activities that increase your symptoms

Ice – apply ice for 10 -15 minutes a session for as often as you need

Take an anti-inflammatory if needed and able

Check with the doctor before purchasing a wrist splint for night time use.

**When to see the doctor:**

No changes in symptoms

Increase in your symptoms

If the symptoms disrupt your daily life

Dropping things more often

Increased weakness

**Prevention:**

Stay at a healthy weight and exercise regularly

Make sure your work station is ergonomically correct

Keep the muscles in your hand and wrist strong and flexible

Avoid performing repeated motions with one hand

If early signs of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome are detected, see your physician

If left untreated, permanent nerve and muscle damage may occur

The treatment will vary depending on the severity of the individual’s condition.

**Treatments may include:**

Patient education – educating the patient on positions to avoid, proper work environment, ways to distribute the load on the hand and wrist, etc

Using an anti-inflammatory medication to manage symptoms

Wearing a wrist splint

Physical therapy

Cortisone injections

Surgery

Speak with your healthcare provider if you have any further questions or concerns, or if you feel that you are experiencing any of these symptoms.