

Radial Tunnel Syndrome (Entrapment of the Radial Nerve)



Overview

This condition involves the radial nerve in your elbow. The radial nerve passes down your arm to your hand. Its branches travel into your thumb, forefinger and middle finger. With this condition, your radial nerve is compressed, stretched or irritated.

Causes

This problem is linked to a tight space in your elbow called the "radial tunnel." Your nerve passes through this tunnel. Inside, it can be squeezed by surrounding tissues. Radial tunnel syndrome can develop if you do a lot of forceful pushing and pulling with your arms. It can be caused by repetitive wrist bends, or by gripping, pinching or twisting motions. It can develop because of a problem with the anatomy of your elbow. And, it can happen because of a sharp blow to your elbow, or because of a tumor.

Symptoms

Symptoms include pain, tenderness and weakness along the top of your forearm just below the elbow. You may feel it in the back of your hand. The pain may feel sharp or achy. It hurts more when you use your arm, especially when you try to straighten your wrist and fingers.

Treatment

Treatment options may include medications, a brace or splint, and therapy. If these aren't helpful, you may need surgery. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.

