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Cubital and Radial Tunnel Syndrome

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Cubital tunnel syndrome and radial tunnel syndrome aren't as familiar as their better-known relative -- [carpal tunnel syndrome](#) -- but they also can cause severe [pain](#), numbness, tingling, and muscle weakness in the hands and arms.

The common cause of all these nerve compression syndromes is increased pressure -- usually from bone or connective tissue -- on a nerve in the wrist, arm, or elbow. In most cases, cubital tunnel syndrome and radial tunnel syndrome can be managed with conservative treatments. But more severe cases may require surgery to reduce pressure on the affected nerve.

Cubital Tunnel Syndrome: Causes and Symptoms

Cubital tunnel syndrome -- also known as ulnar neuropathy -- is caused by increased pressure on the ulnar nerve, which passes close to the skin's surface in the area of the elbow commonly known as the "funny bone." You're more likely to develop cubital tunnel syndrome if you:

- Repeatedly lean on your elbow, especially on a hard surface
- Bend your elbow for sustained periods, such as while talking on a cell phone or sleeping with your hand crooked under your pillow

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Chest pain. The first thing you may think of is heart attack. Certainly chest pain is not something to ignore. But you should know that it has many possible causes. In fact, as much as a quarter of the U.S. population experiences chest pain that is not related to the heart. Chest pain may also be

caused by problems in your lungs, esophagus, muscles, ribs, or nerves, for example. Some of these conditions are serious and life threatening. Others are not. If you have unexplained chest pain, the...

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Sometimes, cubital tunnel syndrome results from abnormal bone growth in the elbow or from intense [physical activity](#) that increases pressure on the ulnar nerve. Baseball pitchers, for example, have an increased risk of cubital tunnel syndrome, because the twisting motion required to throw a slider can damage delicate ligaments in the elbow.

Early symptoms of cubital tunnel syndrome include:

- Pain and numbness in the elbow
- Tingling, especially in the ring and little fingers

More severe symptoms of cubital tunnel syndrome include:

- Weakness affecting the ring and little fingers
- Decreased ability to pinch the thumb and little finger
- Decreased overall hand grip
- Muscle wasting in the hand
- Claw-like deformity of the hand

If you have any of these symptoms, your doctor may be able to diagnose cubital tunnel syndrome by [physical examination](#) alone. He or she also may order a test called [electromyography](#), a procedure in which electrodes placed into muscles and on the skin measure the health of muscles and the nerve cells that control them, to confirm the diagnosis, identify the area of [nerve damage](#), and determine the severity of the condition.

Further Reading:

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[How Dupuytren's Contracture Progresses](#)

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