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Carpal Tunnel Relief Starts with Getting a Proper Diagnosis

Feeling pins and needles in your hands? Tingling? Swelling? Numbness? Loss of strength?

“No matter which of these symptoms you suffer from, they’re often an early warning sign of carpal tunnel syndrome – especially if your symptoms are in the thumb, index and middle finger,” says hand surgeon Andrew Esterle, MD, at Cleveland Clinic Akron General Lodi Hospital.

“Not all hand pain is carpal tunnel syndrome, of course,” says Dr. Esterle. “It’s a very specific nerve issue with telltale signs. When the carpal tunnel, a passageway in your wrist, becomes too crowded because of inflammation or compression, you get pressure on your median nerve, which manifests as these symptoms.”

Get the right diagnosis

If this sounds like you, it’s time to consult your doctor to rule out other hand or wrist issues and start your path to relief. Expect a few tests during your visit.

Splints and medication

Does your hand pain wake you up? “Most people don’t realize they bend their wrists while sleeping,” says Dr. Esterle. “That’s why many patients have nighttime or early morning symptoms.”

Wearing a wrist splint at night can make a big difference because it keeps your wrists straight, avoiding pressure on your nerve. Wearing a splint during the day may help, too. Although there’s no direct link between certain jobs and carpal tunnel, repetitive activities or hobbies – like typing on a keyboard or working on an assembly line – can take a toll.

“You can try anti-inflammatories for pain relief, but the relief may be temporary,” he says. “The same is true of ice. Icing traumatic or arthritic conditions provides relief, but the issues with carpal tunnel are often compressive, so ice won’t provide lasting relief.”

Seek treatment for tougher cases

If wearing splints and changing your movement doesn’t help, your doctor may recommend cortisone injections. “For many, injections provide relief for months,” says Dr. Esterle.



Dr. Esterle

In more severe cases, surgery may be your best option. The good news is carpal tunnel surgery is minimally invasive, has a high rate of success and is usually done under local anesthesia. Most people can return to regular activities within four weeks.

Dr. Esterle is accepting new patients at Lodi Hospital. To schedule an appointment, call 330.344.2663.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Safe At Home

This 90-minute course is designed to prepare students in grades 4-6 to be safe when they are home alone for a short time. Students learn safe habits, accident prevention, cyber safety, dealing with weather emergencies and more.

Monday, June 5 | 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Rittman Library, 49 West Ohio Ave., Rittman

Thursday, June 29 | 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Lodi Library, 5635 Wooster St., Lodi

Free | Register by contacting Pam Evans at Evansp3@ccf.org or 330.948.5535.

Safe Sitter

Teaches babysitter safety, childcare, life and business skills. First aid and rescue skills focus on prevention, injury management, CPR and choking rescue. This class is designed to prepare students in grades 6-8 to be safe when they’re home alone, watching younger siblings or babysitting.

Saturday, April 1 | 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Friday, June 2 | 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Lodi Hospital 225 Elyria St., Lodi

Cost: \$45 | Questions? 330.948.5544

Friends and Family CPR

Learn the life-saving skills of adult, child and infant CPR as well as choking rescue. Group scheduling also available. This is not a certification course.

Thursday, May 4 | 5 - 7 p.m.

Lodi Hospital, 225 Elyria St., Lodi

Free | Registration required: 330.948.5544

Heartsaver CPR Course

American Heart Association’s Heartsaver courses are for those with limited or no medical training who need a course completion card in CPR and AED to meet job, regulatory or other requirements. These courses can also be taken by anyone who wants to be prepared for an emergency in any setting.

Saturday, May 6 | 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Lodi Hospital, 225 Elyria St., Lodi

Cost: \$30 per person | Registration required, class size limited: 330.948.5532

To view all of Lodi Hospital’s Screenings and Community Events, visit: LodiHospital.org/Events

Lodi Hospital Offers Evening Appointments for Speech Therapy Services



Millions of people have improved their communication skills with the help of speech therapy. In addition to early language skills and school readiness, speech therapy helps kids with childhood speech disorders and delays to enhance their comprehension, clarity, voice, fluency and sound production. It can also assist those suffering from speech and cognition impairments caused by illness or accidents like stroke and traumatic brain injury.

Speech therapy improves a person's ability to comprehend and express ideas, thoughts and feelings, which leads to increased self-esteem and better quality of life.

Cleveland Clinic Akron General Lodi Hospital's speech and language pathologist, Linda Ginesi, has extensive experience in all facets of speech therapy and works with patients age 2 and up.

Treatment plans are individualized for each patient. For a stroke patient, that could mean focusing on cognition and memory tasks, while kids who stutter may be encouraged to work on slowing down speech.

Services include:

- Testing for and diagnosing communication disorders
- Speech-language therapy services and therapy for minor swallowing deficits
- Selecting and implementing alternative communication devices

The Speech Department works in conjunction with the hospital's physical and occupational therapy teams for patients who also have physical rehabilitation needs.

Appointments are available by referral on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, with additional daytime hours offered in the summer. The hospital has a dedicated space for both private and group sessions.

To schedule an appointment or learn more, call 330.948.5529.

Nutrition Counseling Available at Lodi Hospital



Are you interested in living a healthier life? Do you want to:

- Learn how to eat healthier to combat certain health conditions?
- Help manage conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, heart disease and more through food choices and preparation?
- Learn about healthy aging?
- Lose, gain or maintain your weight?

If so, Medical Nutrition Therapy may be right for you. Regardless of your reasons, our dietitian customizes her recommendations to fit your medical needs, lifestyle, food preferences and readiness to change. An initial consult takes about one hour, and a referral is required from your medical provider. Many insurance plans cover Medical Nutrition Therapy. If you are unsure of your coverage, reach out to your health insurance carrier. Self-pay options are also available.

For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact Sage Simon, registered dietitian, at simons8@ccf.org or 330.948.5546.

Strawberry Pretzel Squares



INGREDIENTS

2 cups finely crushed pretzels
1/3 cup butter, melted
1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/2 cup sugar, evenly divided
1 1/2 8-ounce packages of reduced-fat cream cheese
2 tablespoons skim (fat-free) milk
1 cup “lite” whipped topping, thawed
2 cups boiling water
One 6-ounce package strawberry gelatin
1 1/2 cups cold water
4 cups sliced fresh strawberries

This delicious fresh fruit dessert has 30% less sugar and half the calories and fat of the traditional version.

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350° F.
2. Mix crushed pretzels, butter, applesauce and 1/4 cup sugar. Press onto bottom of 13- x 9-inch pan. Bake 10 minutes. Cool.
3. Beat cream cheese, milk and remaining sugar until blended. Stir in whipped topping and spread over crust. Refrigerate.
4. Add boiling water to gelatin mix in a large bowl. Stir 2 minutes until completely dissolved. Stir in cold water. Refrigerate for about 1 1/2 hours or until thickened.
5. Stir in strawberries; spoon over layer of cream cheese. Refrigerate for three hours or until firm.

NUTRITION INFORMATION Makes 20 servings. Serving size: 1 square

Calories: 116 | Protein: 2 g | Total fat: 6 g | Saturated fat: 4 g | Cholesterol: 16 mg
Total carbohydrate: 14 g | Sugar: 10 g | Dietary fiber: 1 g | Sodium: 178 mg | Potassium: 56 mg

Recipe courtesy of Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials content team. Published Nov. 8, 2022.