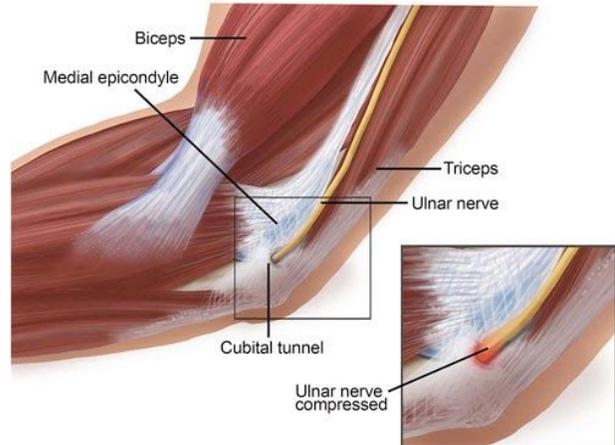


Cubital Tunnel Syndrome

Cubital tunnel syndrome is a condition that involves pressure or stretching of the **ulnar nerve** (also known as the “funny bone” nerve) and is alternatively referred to as **ulnar neuropathy**.

Cubital tunnel syndrome can cause numbness or tingling in the ring and small fingers, pain in the forearm, and/or weakness in the hand.



Causes of cubital tunnel syndrome include:

- *Pressure*: the nerve has little padding over it. Direct pressure, such as leaning the arm on an arm rest, can press on the nerve, causing the arm and hand--especially the ring and small fingers--to “fall asleep.”
- *Stretching*: Keeping the elbow bent for a long time can stretch the nerve begin the elbow. This can happen during sleep.

Cubital tunnel syndrome can cause pain, loss of sensation, tingling, and/or weakness. “Pins and needles” are usually felt in the ring and small fingers. These symptoms are often felt when the elbow is bent for a long period of time, such as while holding a phone or while sleeping. Some people feel weak or clumsy.

Treatment

The first treatment option is to avoid actions that cause symptoms. Wrapping a pillow or towel loosely around the elbow or wearing a splint at night to keep the elbow from bending can help. Avoiding leaning on the “funny bone” can also help. A hand therapy can help you find ways to avoid pressure on the nerve.

Sometimes, surgery may be needed to relieve the pressure on the nerve. This can involve releasing the nerve, moving the nerve to the front of the elbow, and/or removing a part of the bone. Your surgeon will talk to you about these options.

Therapy is sometimes needed after surgery, and the time it takes to recover can vary. Numbness and tingling may improve quickly or slowly. It may take many months for recovery after surgery. Cubital tunnel symptoms may not totally go away after surgery, especially if symptoms are severe.