

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

I am no doctor, and I'm sure that I will miss some of the details revolving around this occupational disease. However, I have noticed that my right wrist and hand will sometimes tingle and can be very painful at times. Upon further research and consultation it has been determined that I may be suffering from the beginning symptoms of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS).

This is a disease that is considered occupational in nature. CTS is generally caused by tasks that require repetitive motion. The symptoms of this disease can be aggravated further if the wrist and hand are contorted in a position that is not a normal range of motion. In my case, using the mouse at the front counter while standing up has really inflamed my wrist.

According to the Center of Disease Control (CDC) the carpal tunnel receives its name from the 8 bones in the wrist, called carpals, that form a tunnel like structure. The tunnel is filled with flexor tendons which control finger movement. It also provides a pathway for the median nerve to reach sensory cells in the hand. Repetitive flexing and extension of the wrist may cause a thickening of the protective sheaths which surround each of the tendons. The swollen tendon sheaths, or tenosynovitis, apply increased pressure on the median nerve and produce CTS.

The beginning symptoms include tingling in the hand and wrist. Some individuals report a feeling of swollenness, although no swelling actually occurs. As the disease progress the tingling in the wrist and hand will become worse and the patient will begin losing strength in the hand. When CTS enters the later stages the patient may have trouble telling the difference between hot and cold. The CDC also says that in advanced cases of CTS the hand will become clumsy when performing typical tasks.

In the last few years' researches have started to discover links between CTS and computer usage. This link may explain the increase in CTS. Many hardware manufactures are recognizing this link and taking precautions to help build awareness of this disease. Keyboards shipped with new computers now include warning labels that warn about the dangers of CTS.

To limit your exposure to CTS you should be sure to take frequent breaks during your workday. During your break you should also perform hand-stretching exercises to keep your hand limber. Computer users could also trade in their standard keyboard for a better-designed ergonomic keyboard.

As for me, I plan to be more aware of the pain in my hand. If your computer is turning into a pain in your "hand" give Thomas, Roger, or Justin a call at the Computer Depot; 947-0749. Also, feel free to e-mail us at sales@computerdepotonline.com and we would be glad to help you with your computer problems.