

# Ulnar Nerve Release

OS21 Lite - Expires end of January 2025



This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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## What is ulnar nerve compression?

The ulnar nerve goes round the back of the inner side of your elbow (sometimes called your 'funny bone'). It then goes through a tight tunnel between the forearm muscles. If the tunnel becomes too tight it can cause pressure on the nerve, usually resulting in numbness in your ring and little fingers.

## What are the benefits of surgery?

The aim is to prevent further damage to the nerve. If you have the operation early enough, the numbness in your hand may get better.

## Are there any alternatives to surgery?

If your symptoms are mild and happen mostly at night, a splint to hold your elbow straight while you are in bed often helps.

## What does the operation involve?

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible. The operation usually takes 30 to 45 minutes.

Your surgeon will make a cut over the back of the inner side of your elbow. They will cut any tight tissue that is compressing the nerve.

Your surgeon may need to remove a piece of bone, or move the nerve so that it lies in front of your elbow.

## How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight.

Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Speak to the healthcare team about any vaccinations you might need to reduce your risk of serious illness while you recover. When you

come into hospital, practise hand washing and wear a face covering when asked.

## What complications can happen?

### General complications of any operation

- Bleeding
- Unsightly scarring of your skin
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Chest infection

### Specific complications of this operation

- Continued numbness in your ring and little fingers
- Return of numbness caused by scar tissue that forms
- Numbness in a patch of skin just below the tip of your elbow
- Tenderness of the scar
- Severe pain, stiffness and loss of use of your arm

### Consequences of this procedure

- Pain

## How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day.

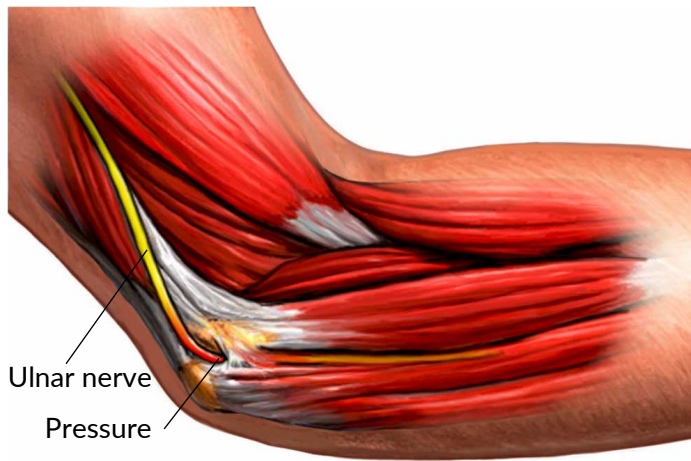
You may be told to rest your arm in a sling for a few days. It is important to gently exercise your fingers, elbow and shoulder to prevent stiffness.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Your symptoms may continue to improve for up to 18 months.

## Summary

Ulnar nerve compression causes numbness in your ring and little fingers. An ulnar nerve release may improve your symptoms and should prevent permanent nerve damage.



#### Ulnar nerve compression

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

### Acknowledgements

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