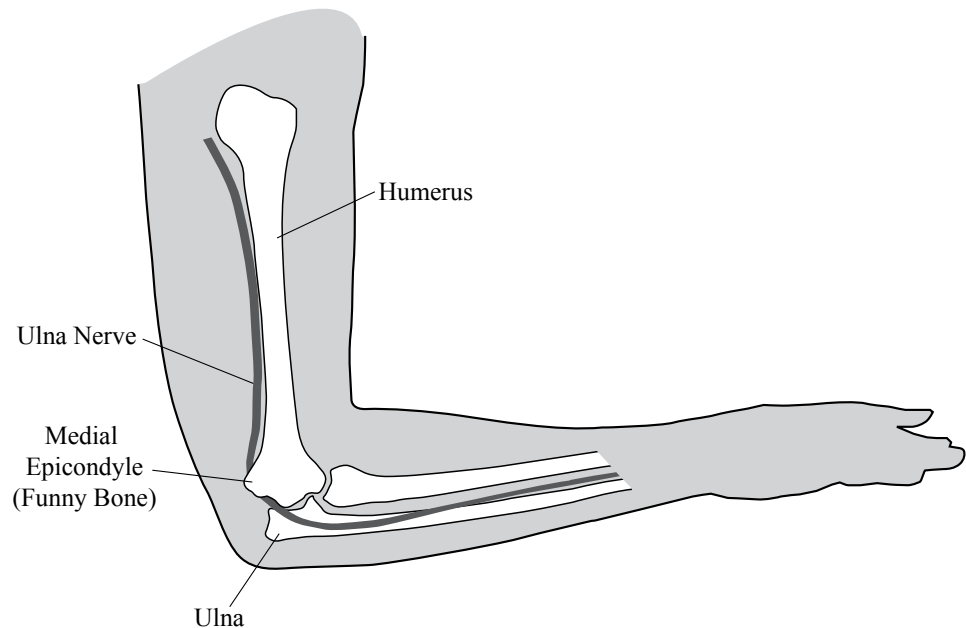


Cubital Tunnel Syndrome



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Cubital tunnel syndrome is caused by pressure on the ulnar nerve at the elbow. The ulnar nerve goes down the arm and lies under the bone of the elbow, known as the funny bone. The nerve is right against the bone at that spot with little padding to protect it. Pressure against the nerve, or swelling or irritation of the nerve over time can change the way the nerve works.



Signs

You may have one or more of these signs:

- Pain
- Numbness or tingling in the ring finger and little finger
- Weak grip
- Clumsiness or drop things
- Problems pinching thumb and fingers together
- Loss of feeling in hand
- Loss of muscle strength in hand

The signs most often occur when there is pressure on the nerve from:

- Repeated bending and straightening of the elbow
- Pressing the elbow down on an arm rest or firm surface
- Holding the elbow in a bent position over time, such as while sleeping or when holding a phone to your ear

Testing

Your doctor will ask about your health history and check your arm and hand for weakness and changes in sensation. Other tests may be done including:

- Blood tests to check for other health problems, such as diabetes or thyroid problems
- Nerve conduction study and electromyogram (EMG) to check for other nerve problems

Treatment

You may need to:

- Wear an elbow pad to reduce pressure against the nerve
- Change your activities, so you have less pressure on your elbow
- Use a splint at night to keep your arm straight
- See an occupational therapist to learn ways to avoid pressure on the ulnar nerve at your elbow

If these treatments are not helpful, surgery may be needed. Surgery to relieve cubital tunnel is often done as an outpatient procedure. The doctor may move the nerve to the front of the elbow or place it under more fat or muscle to protect it. Sometimes the bone is trimmed off to ease pressure on the nerve. Your doctor will talk to you about what surgery treatment may be best for your condition.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.