

Nerve Decompression

General indications for the procedure:

The indications for the procedure are to treat pain and nerve dysfunction resulting from compressive neuropathy in the hand, wrist or elbow

Description of Procedure:

The area of anatomic compression of the nerve is exposed using an open surgical incision. Special care is taken to identify and protect the nerve being released and all other neurovascular structures. Using either a knife or scissors, any tight structures pressing on the nerve are released. Occasionally, if the anatomy of the area can still set up the nerve to be compressed, the nerve may have to be moved into a position that would create less pressure. These procedures are done under general or regional anesthesia.

Risks of the Procedure:

The risks of the procedure include infection at the surgical site, injury to arteries or nerves in the area of the surgical incisions (particularly numbness around the surgical incision is common), persistent pain in the surgical area or the nerve distribution area, incomplete recovery of the sensation or motor strength supplied by the nerve, stiffness after healing, and possible need for further surgery.

Procedure Alternatives, if any:

The alternatives to the surgery are nonoperative treatment using splints, oral pain medicine, injections, and activity modifications.

Probable Consequences of Refusing Procedure:

The probable consequences of refusing this procedure are progressive nerve compression with worsening loss of sensation and strength.

Person(s) Performing the Procedure:

The key portions of this procedure will be performed by an attending physician with the assistance of the Orthopaedic Resident Staff. The parts of the procedure performed by Residents will be in accordance with hospital policies, based on their skill set, and under the direct supervision of the attending physician.