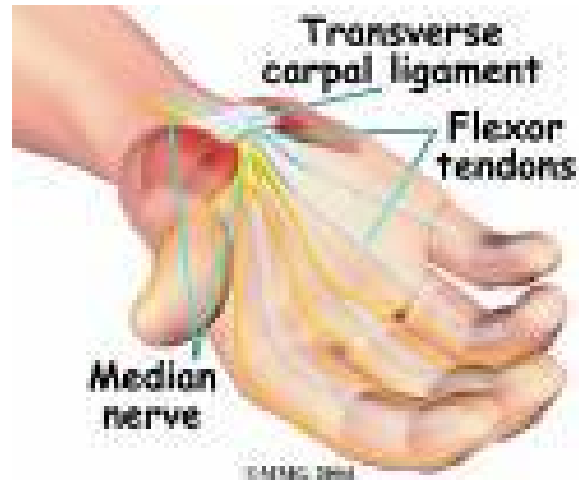


Carpal Tunnel

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The median nerve passes through the carpal tunnel, a canal in the wrist that is surrounded by bone on three sides, and a transverse carpal ligament on the fourth. The flexor tendons of the hand pass through this canal. The median nerve can be compressed by a decrease in the size of the canal, an increase in the size of the contents (such as the swelling of tissue around the flexor tendons), or both.

Compression of the median nerve as it runs deep to the transverse carpal ligament (TCL) causes wasting of the body of muscles on the palm of the hand , as well as sensory loss in the distribution of the median nerve farthest from the center of attachment to the transverse carpal ligament. There is a superficial sensory branch of the median nerve, which branches proximal to the TCL and travels superficial to it. This branch is therefore spared, and it supplies the nerves of the palm towards the thumb.

It is characterized by tingling in the wrists, usually caused by repetitive flexing and extension of the wrists. Without treatment, it can lead to pain, decreased grip strength, and temperature insensitivity.