

Ulnar nerve release

What is ulnar nerve compression?

The ulnar nerve goes round the back of the inner side of your elbow. 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 does the operation involve?

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 move the nerve so that it lies in front of your elbow.

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

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 few months.

Dr Naveen Agarwal

GENERAL AND LAPAROSCOPIC SURGEON

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.

