

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Mrs Ebs TestPatient-TestPatient  
Provide HQ  
900 The Crescent  
Colchester Business Park  
Colchester  
CO4 9YQ

13 Aug 2020 13:40  
INSERT NHS NUMBER

**NHS Carpal Tunnel Service  
Assessment Appointment**

Dear Mrs TestPatient-TestPatient

Further to our conversation, this is to confirm the appointment for assessment of your hand problem is on:-

**(INSERT APPOINTMENT DATE)**

Please note this is an appointment for an assessment only. It is not an appointment for surgery.

During this appointment our clinician will discuss the best treatment for you with the Tollgate Clinic for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome or refer you to another service if you are not diagnosed with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

**On Arrival – Tollgate Clinic, Colchester**

The entrance to Tollgate Health Centre is located opposite Sainsbury's bus stop. There is plenty of free parking spaces. If you are travelling by car, please wait in your car on arrival and Tollgate Clinic will ring you when the clinician is ready to see you, and we will let you know where you need to go. If you are traveling by public transport, please let us know in advance so that we can ensure there is an appropriate area for you to wait in.

**On Arrival – North Road Primary Care Centre, Westcliff-On-Sea**

The closest bus stop is located on London Road outside 'My Local', then Turn down North Road which is opposite 'The Cricketers pub'. North Road Primary Care Centre is located approximately half way down North Road. There is Parking available at the North Road Primary Care Centre. If you are travelling by car, please wait in your car on arrival and Tollgate Clinic will ring you when the clinician is ready to see you, and we will let you know where you need to go. If you are traveling by public transport, please let us know in advance so that we can ensure there is an appropriate area for you to wait in.

Information relating to 'Carpel Tunnel' and 'Your Information - Your Rights' is enclosed in this letter and can be found on our website [www.tollgateclinic.com](http://www.tollgateclinic.com) in 'Patient information leaflets' section.

If you have any feedback regarding our service following your appointment, please let us know on Tel: 01206 987 525, email us at [tollgateclinic.wellbeing@nhs.net](mailto:tollgateclinic.wellbeing@nhs.net) or see our website for our Complaints Policy.

If you need to cancel or change your appointment then please contact us at least 7 days before your appointment.

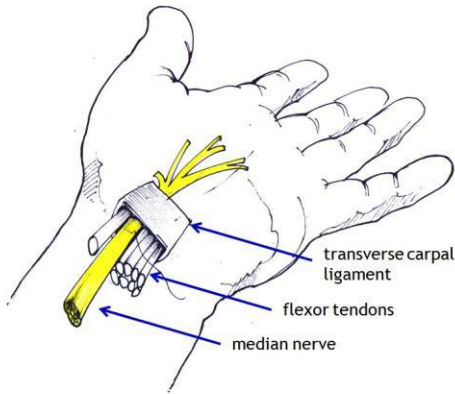
Yours sincerely

**Tollgate Clinic**

## DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

### What is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome?

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) is a condition where the median nerve is compressed where it passes through a short tunnel at the wrist. The tunnel contains the tendons that bend the fingers and thumb as well as the nerve (see diagram).



CTS commonly affects women in middle age but can occur at any age in either sex. CTS can occur with pregnancy, diabetes, thyroid problems, rheumatoid arthritis and other less common conditions, but most sufferers have none of these.

CTS may be associated with swelling in the tunnel which may be caused by inflammation of the tendons, a fracture of the wrist, wrist arthritis and other less common conditions. In most cases, the cause is not identifiable.

### What are the symptoms?

The main symptom is altered feeling in the hand, affecting the thumb, index, middle and ring fingers; it is unusual for the little finger to be involved. Many people describe the altered feeling as tingling. Tingling is often worse at night or first thing in the morning. It may be provoked by activities that involve gripping an object, for example a mobile telephone or newspaper, especially if the hand is elevated.

In the early stages, numbness and tingling are intermittent and sensation will return to normal. If the condition worsens, the numbness and tingling may become continuous, together with weakness and wasting of the muscles at the base of the thumb.

Sufferers often describe a feeling of clumsiness and drop objects easily. CTS may be associated with pain in the wrist and forearm. In some cases, nerve conduction tests are needed to confirm the diagnosis.

### What is the treatment?

Non-surgical treatments include the use of splints, especially at night, and steroid injection into the carpal tunnel. CTS occurring in pregnancy often resolves after the baby is born.

Surgery is frequently required. Although CTS often affects both hands, it is best to operate on one at a time. If you need a second operation we can arrange this a few weeks later.

The operation involves opening the roof of the tunnel to reduce the pressure on the nerve (see diagram: the roof of the carpal tunnel is called the transverse carpal ligament). The operation is performed under a local anaesthetic. Afterwards the site of the operation is covered by a small adhesive dressing. You will usually not need a bandage or a sling.

We either use soluble stiches which will dissolve on their own or non-soluble stiches which will need to be removed approximately two weeks after your operation.

After your operation, night pain and tingling should disappear within a few weeks. In severe cases, improvement of constant numbness and muscle weakness may be slow or incomplete. It generally takes about three months to regain full strength and a fully comfortable scar, but the hand can be used for light activities from the day of surgery. The more you use your hand after the operation, the faster it will recover.

#### **If I need an Operation, how long will it take?**

If the conclusion from your appointment is that you need an operation, we explain the procedure and answer your questions. If you are happy to proceed, you will then be able to book a second appointment for your operation. On average you will be at the surgery about an hour in all for a surgical appointment. You do not need to starve beforehand. If you are on Warfarin or another blood thinner you must tell the clinic – it is likely you will be advised to stop taking blood thinners up to 7 days prior to surgery. You should bring someone with you to drive you home afterwards.

#### **Will it hurt?**

When the local anaesthetic is injected into the skin of the hand, you will feel some discomfort, but as soon as it takes effect, you should feel no pain. Afterwards you may be in pain for a couple of days, especially at night and you might need to take regular pain killers. You will be provided with complete instructions about what to do after surgery.

#### **How soon can I go back to work?**

If your job doesn't involve heavy work, you can go back as soon as you feel ready. If your job does involve heavy work, or if your job involves handling food or nursing sick patients, you should take at least a full week off. You will recover quicker the sooner you return to normal activities including work. You may drive as soon as you feel in control of the car but recommend you contact your insurance company to review their policy. We can provide you with an Off Work Certificate if you need one. Please ask the Clinician for this during your appointment.

## COVID-19 PATIENT SCREENING, SELF-ISOLATION AND SOCIAL DISTANCING INFORMATION

Patients will be asked to answer the following questions the day prior to any face-to-face appointment and on the day of the appointment.

### 1) Are you presenting with any COVID-19 Symptoms?

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

- a) Yes – Please contact the clinic to rearrange your appointment for after a 14-day period.
- b) No – Continue with Q2

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.

Additional advice for patients:

- Get a test to check if you have coronavirus as soon as possible.
- Stay at home and do not have visitors until you get your test result – only leave your home to have a test.

### 2) Are you, or should you be self-isolating?

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

- a) Yes – Do not to attend clinic. Please contact the Clinic and your appointment will be cancelled and will be rebooked for after a 14-day period.
- b) No – continue with Q3

*You should self-isolate if:*

- *you have any [symptoms of coronavirus](#) (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)*
- *you have tested positive for coronavirus – this means you have coronavirus*
- *you live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive*
- *someone in your support bubble has symptoms or has tested positive*
- *[you're told by NHS Test and Trace that you've been in contact with a person with coronavirus](#)*

### 3) A face covering is required to be worn inside the building, unless you are exempt, please advise us on arrival if you are exempt.

Government guidelines are that face coverings must be worn however some people, such as those with respiratory problems, are exempt from the requirement.

### 4) Are you attending the clinic appointment with a carer?

- a. Yes – Please advise one of our team at earliest convenience.
- b. No – You are required to attend appointment/building on their own.

**On Arrival at the Clinic**

- Please wait in your car on arrival and Tollgate Clinic will ring you when the clinician is ready to see you.
- Please make sure you are wearing your **face covering**.
- Please use the hand sanitiser on arrival and leaving the building.
- Healthcare professionals will be wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment.
- Everyone should maintain social distancing in the building and follow patient flow notices and instructions.
- Please note that there will be limited use of toilets at the clinic however please feel free to ask a member of our team if you would like to use the facilities.
- Should your good health change, or you need to cancel or change your appointment they should contact the Tollgate Clinic as soon as possible.
- If you require any further appointments, please return home and phone the office, where we will be happy to book you in.
- If you need assistance our team will be happy to escort you back to your car after your procedure.

**Thank you very much for your support during this time.**

## “YOUR INFORMATION – YOUR RIGHTS”

### What information we hold about you

We ask you for information about yourself so that we can give you appropriate care and treatment. This information is kept together with details of the care you have received because it may be needed if we see you again.

### What it is used for

During your diagnosis and/or treatment with us we will record information about your medical condition and any treatment we administer or recommend for you. This information will be communicated in confidence to your GP (General Practitioner), who will add it to your NHS health record. It will also be communicated in confidence to the local NHS service commissioner in order to justify payment to the Clinic for the services we have provided.

We may sometimes use this information for looking at wider issues of public health or planning our

Clinic services including:

- Preparing statistics on our performance for the NHS and making sure our services meet patients’ needs (all of this involving anonymised data)
- Helping staff review the care they provide to make sure it is of the highest standard
- Helping with health research approved by the Local Research Ethics Committee (this will be done on an anonymised basis)

### Sharing your information with other people

Everyone working for or on behalf of the NHS has a legal duty to keep your information confidential and anyone who receives that information from Tollgate Clinic is bound by the same legal duty. We only ever use or pass on information about you if people have a genuine need for it in order to act in your interests. Whenever we can we remove details that would identify you.

The sharing of some information is strictly controlled by law. So unless there are exceptional circumstances such as when the safety of others is at risk we will not disclose your information to third parties without your permission. We will only give information to your relatives, friends and carers if you want us to. Sometimes the law requires us to report information to appropriate authorities, for example, to protect the safety of members of the public.

Our aim is to ensure that any records we have about you are accurate, secure, held in confidence and only accessed on a strictly need to know basis.

### Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act 1998 gives you the general right to apply to see or have a copy of any **personal information** in your health record. This is known as the right of ‘subject access’.

If you want to see your records you should make a written request (letter or email) to Tollgate Clinic. Unless we have grounds to believe that seeing your records might put you or someone else at risk, we are obliged to let you see the information and also to explain any part of the record which you do not understand. You are also entitled to receive a copy of the information you have seen. Legally we must respond within 40 working days.

## **Freedom of Information (FOI) Act**

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 gives the right of access to **all types** of information held by public authorities including the NHS. It supplements and complements the Data Protection Act 1998, which gives individuals access to personal information held about them. The Freedom of

Information Act does not cover access to personal information.

It seeks to balance three public rights:

- The right to information
- The right to confidentiality
- The right to effective public administration

Some information held by Tollgate Clinic (information not related to the provision of NHS services) is not subject to the FOI Act 2000. The Clinic's 'Publication Scheme', a copy of which is available upon request, outlines which types of information we regularly make available to the public.

Requests for information under the Act should be made in writing (by letter or email) to Tollgate Clinic. The request must state the name and address of the person applying for the information and the required information. By law we will have 20 working days in which to respond to a request.

## **Information Commissioner**

The Information Commissioner enforces and oversees the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Commissioner is a UK independent supervisory authority reporting directly to the UK Parliament and has an international role as well as a national one. See [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk) for details.

## **Patient Feedback and Complaints**

At Tollgate Clinic we are interested to hear your comments regarding the service you receive. If you feel you would like to make a complaint, please see our Reception Staff at the Clinic or contact our General Manager, Caroline Brock on 01206 987 525 to discuss any concern you might have regarding our service.

If you have any requests or queries relating to your information and your rights, contact us at:

Tollgate Clinic  
145 London Road  
Stanway  
Colchester  
CO3 8NZ  
Telephone: 01206 987 525  
Email: [Tollgateclinic.wellbeing@nhs.net](mailto:Tollgateclinic.wellbeing@nhs.net)  
[www.tollgateclinic.com](http://www.tollgateclinic.com)

Tollgate Clinic will provide advice and assistance to anyone who has made or is thinking of making a subject access request or request for information.

Literature provided by Tollgate Clinic is also available in other languages and formats.  
Please contact us for further information.