

# Dr. Colin Gage \* Dr. Duane Drobot

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Nicola Valley Chiropractic  
1949 Quilchena Ave.  
P.O. Box 909  
Merritt, BC  
V1K 1B8

Ph: (250) 378-5456  
Fax: (250) 378-8259  
Email: info@merrittchiro.com  
Website: www.merrittchiro.com

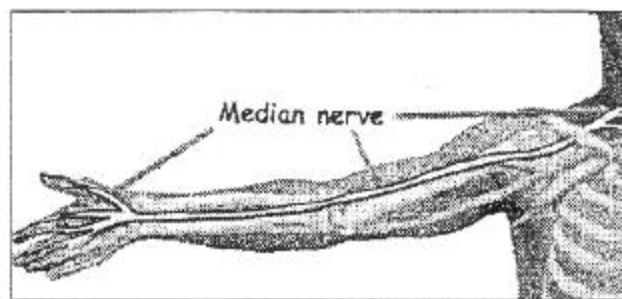
*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## Carpal Tunnel

As people in our society spend more time at computers, the incidence of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is increasing dramatically. As we type or use a mouse, our wrists are in a bent position for prolonged periods of time. This puts pressure on one of the three main nerves that pass through the wrist -the "median nerve". The nerve is surrounded by eight small bones on one side and a large ligament on the other side. This makes a tunnel where the nerve must pass through. After using the wrist repetitively, swelling can accumulate in the small space where the nerve passes. There is no room for the swelling to expand so the pressure is put on the nerve instead. When this occurs, you will feel numbness in the thumb, index finger, middle finger, and part of the ring finger. The pinky finger will rarely be involved. The symptoms can be worse at night. Pain or numbness may also be experienced in the arm, shoulder, and even the neck.

There are many different types of treatment for carpal tunnel syndrome. The most common used by medical doctors includes using a splint to immobilize the wrist, anti-inflammatory drugs, and avoiding using it for a period of time. In the chiropractic office, patients are told to avoid any repetitive movements of the wrist, splint it if necessary, and use ice to reduce the swelling. Chiropractors also "mobilize" the joints between the eight wrist bones to increase their movement. This allows the wrist to move more freely and reduces the chances of the swelling reoccurring.



Very often in a Chiropractor's office, we have patients that come to see us with what they think is carpal tunnel syndrome. However, their symptoms are not

always originating completely in the wrist. In your neck, eight nerves come from the spinal cord and exit the spine between each of the vertebrae. As seen in the diagram below, three of these nerves fuse to form the median nerve. This nerve passes through the shoulder, across the elbow, through the tunnel in the wrist, and into the hand. One of the three nerves that make up the median nerve may be irritated or pinched in the neck, creating very similar problems in the wrist and hand. The median nerve can also be pinched in the shoulder or elbow, again creating very similar problems. All of these possibilities have to be ruled out, especially if the normal carpal tunnel treatments are not working. Whoever you choose to treat your potential carpal tunnel syndrome, be sure they examine the neck, shoulder, and elbow as well.