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## Using Emu Oil for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

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Several folks have reported relief from carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms of the burning and tingling numbness in the fingers, with applications of emu oil to the wrist area. Since some individuals suffer permanent nerve damage from carpal tunnel syndrome, it is worth some degree of caution when recommending emu oil for treatment.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a repetitive stress injury reported at an increasing rate in the U.S. work force. Anyone who does repetitive work with their hands and arms is susceptible. Musicians, cooks, writers, typists and others complain of finger stiffness in the morning, a weakened grip and pain and numbness in the hands and wrists.

The syndrome occurs when the tendons in the wrist become inflamed after some type of aggravation such as typing or writing. These tendons pass between the bones and ligaments of the palm of the hand in a constricted area called a tunnel. Treatment includes resting the hands using splints. Oral and injected anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen are also common treatments. Surgery may be used to expand the tunnel and reduce the pressure on the nerve that is causing the pain.

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke reports that 1% of individuals with this syndrome develop permanent injury. The majority recover completely and can avoid re-injury by changing the way they do repetitive movements, the frequency with which they do the movements, and the amount of time they rest between periods when they perform repetitive movements. An uncommon but very effective treatment is to take vitamins B6 and B2. Doctors

noticed that carpal tunnel syndrome often occurred in women on birth control pills that had high estrogen doses (these products are no longer available). Pregnant women also have an increased risk for carpal tunnel syndrome. And finally, diabetics are also at increased risk. All these conditions are associated with an increased need for vitamin B6. The dose of vitamin B6 is 200 to 300 mg per day in divided doses. Vitamin B2 is necessary to convert vitamin B6 into its active form. This treatment should be tried for three months; if there is no symptom relief by then, vitamin B6 may not be for you.

In summary: Emu oil may act in an anti-inflammatory manner to relieve the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome similar to oral anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin and Motrin. Vitamins B6 and B2 can be taken for 3 months at a daily dose of 300 mg for each vitamin. These should be taken in 100 mg. doses at each meal. If, after a trial of 3 months there is no benefit from the use of emu oil and the B vitamins, you should seek other therapies since permanent nerve damage may occur in some people.

**The information provided is strictly educational and not intended as medical advice. For diagnosis and treatment, consult your physician.**