

Intersection Syndrome

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An intersection syndrome is a relatively rare overuse tendinitis affecting the wrist. The pain and swelling occur on the back of the forearm near the wrist joint and on the side by the thumb. Oftentimes, one can see swelling in this area; with wrist or finger motion, oftentimes, it will be a Velcro-like sensation in the back of the wrist. The inflammation occurs at the so-called intersection area between tendons that go to the wrist and thumb. Where these tendons crossover at the back of the wrist, there is a point of inflammation in the coverings of the tendon that will give this type of sensation. Fortunately, most cases do respond to a course of splinting and therapy.

Topical applications such as a modality called iontophoresis by a certified hand therapist can usually eliminate this pain. Therapy is best done as an adjunct with rest and splinting.

Occasionally, this condition will be seen in conjunction with de Quervain's tenosynovitis. Occasionally, a Cortisone injection can also be helpful to treat this condition; surgery is rarely needed.

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