

Post-operative Instructions: Carpal Tunnel Release

Dressing: Please keep your dressing clean and dry for 3 days. On the 4th day after surgery, you should take your dressing off. You may then wash your hands and get your operative hand wet in the shower, but please do not scrub the wound. No soaking please (ie- no bath tubs, no doing dishes, no swimming). Once you are done washing your hands, please pat the wound dry and place a band aid over the wound. You may put an ice pack on to help reduce pain and swelling.

Activity: The more you rest in the first few days after surgery, the less bleeding, swelling, pain, and scar tissue you will have. After the first few days, you may use your hand for light activity **that does not cause pain** (typing, eating, writing). You should gently open and close your fingers daily to avoid stiffness, but please avoid squeeze balls. No heavy lifting (over 10 lbs) on your operative extremity for 4-6 weeks after surgery.

Pain control: It is normal to have pain and discomfort as you are recovering from surgery. The pain from a carpal tunnel release typically extends from your palm up above the wrist. We recommend that you start your pain medication right when you get home (before the numbing medication from the surgery wears off). If you can take NSAIDs based on your medical history, please start with those medications to help minimize the side effects from stronger, narcotic pain medication. You may also be given a prescription for a narcotic pain medication. Please use the narcotic medication as sparingly as possible to avoid trouble with side effects (nausea, constipation, dizziness, addiction). It is okay to take Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, or Aleve in addition to the narcotic pain medication if your medical history allows NSAIDs (but best to take those medications with food to avoid GI upset). Please do not mix Tylenol/Acetaminophen with your narcotic medication, as the narcotics often come with Tylenol/Acetaminophen mixed in. As your pain decreases, please wean yourself off of the narcotics as soon as possible by substituting over the counter medications instead (ie- Advil, Motrin, Tylenol, or Aleve). For constipation, you can take 300 mg of colace a day (colace is an over the counter stool softener).

Follow up: Please make an appointment for ~14 days after surgery.

Return to work/school: You may return to light activity at work/school once you no longer need narcotic pain medication, but no heavy lifting on the operative extremity is allowed.

For questions, please call the office: 301-657-9876