
Post-Operative Instructions: Carpal Tunnel Release

Pain Management:

- Post operative pain is best controlled with multi-modal treatment. This typically involves a combination of some or all of the following medications/injections: Regional nerve blocks (interscalene nerve block), NSAID's, acetaminophen, narcotic medications, and/or gabapentin.
- Medication prescriptions will be provided at the time of your surgical procedure.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication.
- Icing the affected area can be very effective in controlling swelling and inflammation and can also be effective in helping to control pain.
- ***Note: Exceeding the maximum amount of pain medicine, Tylenol/acetaminophen or taking alcohol with these medicines can lead to liver failure and death.***

Diet:

- Following surgery, nausea is very common. Begin with clear liquids and progress to your daily diet as tolerated.

Activity:

- No lifting with your operative hand
- You should work on extending and bending your fingers and elbow through a full range of motion several times per day. These exercises can be started the day after surgery and are strongly encouraged.
- You are encouraged to walk in a controlled environment.
- Wear your wrist splint for the first two weeks following surgery except for therapeutic exercises and hygiene.
- Driving may be resumed when you are off narcotic pain medications and feel you can safely control your vehicle. Estimate is 3 days after surgery; however, this can vary from person to person.

Work:

- If you have a desk job you should be able to return to work in a couple of days. However, no lifting with your operative arm. Additionally, over use and repetitive tasks with your operative hand should be avoided.
- If you work in an occupation that requires more strenuous activity or lifting your return to work may be 6 weeks or more.
- Maximal medical improvement and full duty without restrictions is estimated at 3 months.

Wound Management:

- You should remove your dressing 2 days after your surgery. Apply new dressings to cover your wound daily (band-aids usually suffice).
- You may shower 2 days after your surgery. Water may run over wound. Blot dry after shower.
- Do not allow your wound to soak in water (i.e. hot tub or bath) until cleared by your physician. Estimate 2 weeks pending proper healing.
- Sutures will be removed by your physician, his nurse, or his PA at your first follow-up appointment.
- Call your physician immediately if you have purulent drainage (thick, yellowish drainage) from you wound, increasing redness or pain (847) 381-0388.

Follow-up appointment:

- Your follow-up appointments should have been scheduled prior to your surgery (see attached page).