

PATIENT POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Carpal Tunnel Release

1. DRESSINGS AND SUTURES

- In general, you can begin showering 2-3 days after surgery.
 - Wrap your hand and incision with Saran Wrap to keep dressings and incision covered and dry.
- Do your best to keep the surgical site dry.
 - Make sure to towel dry/dab the surgical site if it gets wet, however DO NOT rub the area.
- Do NOT submerge the incision (ie. hot tub / bath, swimming, etc) until at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- Typically your sutures will be removed about 7-10 days after surgery.

2. ACTIVITY

- Partial weight bearing with the surgical hand is allowed immediately after surgery unless told otherwise by Dr. Berry or his assistant. No excessive gripping or grasping and do not lift more than 10 pounds with the surgical hand.
- Avoid excessive exercise with the surgical hand the first 1-2 weeks post-op.

3. PAIN

- Local anesthetic has been placed into your hand – this will wear off in 6-8 hours after surgery.
- You have been provided with a prescription for several different medications that when used together will provide the most effective relief after your surgery.
 - Read each bottle carefully and follow instructions
- Once you no longer require narcotics for pain control, switch to Extra-Strength Tylenol as required, but do not take Tylenol with the narcotic.
- You can use an ice pack or cold therapy delivery system for 20 mins every hour while awake to help with pain and swelling. When you have dressings in place, however it may not be as effective with the bulky dressings.

4. BLEEDING AND SWELLING

- It is common to have some spotting through the dressings following surgery. Your fingers will often look “puffy”, this is normal. If spotting or bleed through occurs through the dressing, place an additional dressing over it.
- The incision may continue to “leak” fluid after removal of the initial dressing – this is common and should not raise concern. Place an additional bandage or Band-Aids over the incisions to help them heal. Many of our patients like to use the waterproof bandaids. Keep the incisions clean and dry.

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- When sitting or lying, keep your hand elevated with several pillows placed under the arm to help decrease swelling and relieve pain. We don't recommend a sling as this forces you to carry your hand below your heart, leading to swelling.

5. DIET

- Resume your previous diet following surgery – drink plenty of fluids!
- Add additional fiber to your diet to help relieve the constipation associated with the pain medication.

6. RED FLAGS

- Complications after Carpal Tunnel Surgery are very rare but can occur. If you develop any of the following symptoms go to your nearest emergency department for assessment:
 - Increased swelling that does not improve with elevation and ice or excessive bleeding that saturates your dressings
 - Shortness of breath
 - Chest pain
 - Redness and purulent drainage around the incision

7. POST-OPERATIVE VISIT

- Your first post-operative visit is scheduled for: _____