



Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery Post-operative Instructions

Successful surgery depends not only on the success of the procedure, but also on your cooperation and compliance during the post-operative period. To assist you in this process, below are instructions and guidelines to follow during your recovery period.

Wound

- There are typically sutures in the incision that will need to be removed in our office. Your incision will be assessed for these at your post-operative office visit.
- Change your dressing only if it becomes soiled or wet. You may shower but you need to cover the incision with a plastic covering to keep it dry. **Do not swim or soak in water for 6 weeks.**
- Your wrist/hand will be in a splint for about 2 weeks following surgery. Please do not remove the splint unless you have to change the dressing.
- Do not put creams or ointments on the wound for about 3 weeks after surgery unless instructed to use an antibiotic ointment.

Pain Relief

- Our office will provide you with a prescription for a mild pain medication to help with your surgical pain. You should use these medications only as directed and only if needed. Most of your discomfort should be manageable with an over the counter medication such as Tylenol.
- As your incision heals, we would expect you to begin weaning from prescription medications. This should begin about 1-2 weeks after surgery.
- If you are prescribed antibiotics after surgery, please finish them in their entirety.
- You will need to avoid anti-inflammatory medications for 1 week before and 2 weeks following surgery.
- You will need to avoid blood thinners (Aspirin, Coumadin, Lovenox, Plavix) for 1 week prior to surgery. In most cases, you may restart them (at the doctor's discretion 4 days after surgery).
- **Remember, ABSOLUTELY NO MEDICATION REFILLS WILL BE PROCESSED ON THE WEEKEND.** Please plan accordingly. Contact your pharmacy to process all refill requests.

Exercise/Activity

- Your biggest restriction will be to avoid using the affected hand. We will remove the splint at your first post-operative office visit.
- It is important to elevate the affected hand above the level of your heart to prevent swelling in your fingers.
- Physical therapy will begin after your first post-operative visit (usually at 2 weeks after surgery). You will go 3 times a week for 4 weeks unless the therapist feels you do not need that many visits.
- Do not lift more than 5-10 lbs for the first 3 weeks after surgery. The physical therapist will assist you with increasing your physical activity safely.
- **DO NOT SMOKE.** Smoking could delay or interfere with your body's ability to heal after surgery. See your primary care physician if you need assistance to quit smoking.

Driving

- You are not allowed to drive for approximately 2 weeks after surgery. You should be seen in the office before starting to drive.
- It is the policy of this office to advise you not to drive while under the influence of pain medications.

Return to Work

- If you can work from home, you can begin doing light desk/phone work as tolerated about 1-2 weeks after surgery.
- If you have to report to the office to perform your job, you will be able to do this after your 2 week office visit. You will be restricted to light desk/phone type work as should not be lifting with the affected hand.
- If your job requires heavy physical activity, you will be unable to perform this type of work for at least 8-10 weeks after surgery.

Follow-up

- You have a follow-up scheduled with one of our clinical staff in our Plano office on _____ . Please arrive at least 10 minutes early to check in.

What to Watch For

- Please contact our office for any of the following:
Oral temperature greater than 100.5 ° F
Excessive redness, swelling, or drainage at the incision site
New, increasing pain/numbness/weakness
Excessive swelling and/or discoloration of your fingers on the affected hand
- Numbness present before surgery may take several months to resolve. Please be aware there may always be some residual numbness.
- For general medical problems such as sore throat, cough, nasal drainage, etc., please contact your primary care physician. You should also contact your primary care physician regarding in questions about your routine medications not prescribed by this office.
- For medical emergencies, please call 911 or report to the nearest emergency room.



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Date of Surgery: _____ Scheduled Surgery Time: _____ Hospital Arrival Time: _____ No food or drink after midnight day prior to surgery.