

Carpal Tunnel Release Postoperative Instructions

ACTIVITY

- Begin gentle wrist and finger range of motion 2 days after surgery.
 - At 2 weeks you may begin gentle scar massages.
- No heavy lifting, pushing, pulling for the first 3 weeks.
 - At 3 weeks you may begin strengthening with low weights and progress as tolerated.

DRESSING

- You will have a soft dressing applied to your hand and wrist.
- Keep this dressing clean, dry and intact.
- Remove dressing on post operative day 2 and place a clean band aid over your incision.
- Beginning on postoperative day 2 you may let soap and water gently wash over the incisions, but do not scrub your incision. After showering, gently dry the area and apply new band aids.
- Do NOT submerge your incisions (pools, baths, dishwasher, or hot tubs) until your incisions are completely healed.

PAIN CONTROL

- You may have received a local anesthetic injection at the time of your surgery. This provides excellent pain relief for the first 8-24 hours following surgery. This injection wears off at various times for each patient.
- Once this injection wears off, you may need a few doses of pain medication, but most patients are able to quickly wean from any narcotics and manage their pain with Tylenol or NSAIDs.
- We also recommend icing frequently for pain or swelling after surgery.
 - You can use any form of ice (a bag filled with ice cubes, bag of frozen veggies, or reusable ice pack).
 - Use a protective layer (such as a dish towel) between the ice and your skin, so that you do not freeze your skin.
 - Ice for 20 minutes at a time, with at least 20 minutes off in between icing sessions.

MEDICATIONS

- Oxycodone 5 mg, 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed
 - This is a narcotic pain medication for moderate to severe pain. Most patients will not need more than a few doses of this medication.
- Tylenol 500 mg, 2 tablets every 8 hours
 - We recommend this as a baseline pain medication for the first week following surgery.
 - DO NOT exceed 4000 mg of Tylenol in a 24-hour period.

- Ibuprofen 200 mg, 3 tablets every 8 hours
 - If you can take NSAIDs, over the counter Ibuprofen can be helpful for mild to moderate pain and can replace narcotic pain medication.
- Zofran (ondansetron) 4 mg, 1 tablet every 6 hours as needed for nausea
 - This is an anti-nausea medication that can help resolve nausea associated with anesthesia and narcotic pain medications.
- Colace (stool softener) 100 mg twice daily
 - The use of narcotic pain medication can cause constipation. We suggest using an over-the-counter stool softener (Colace) while taking pain medication. Stop taking this medication if diarrhea develops.
- Resume all home medications the day after surgery.
- Variations in postoperative medications may be made on an individual basis.

DRIVING

- You are not allowed to drive while taking narcotic pain medication.
- You may drive once you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication.

POSTOPERATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Your first postoperative appointment will be 2 weeks after your surgery.
- Your second postoperative appointment will be approximately 6 weeks after surgery.

REASONS TO CALL THE OFFICE

- Please call Dr. Schuette's office (952-442-6943) if you have any questions or concerns, or develop the following:
 - Increased pain that is not responding to pain medication
 - Increased warmth or redness at the surgical site
 - Large amounts of bleeding or drainage
 - A sustained fever greater than 101° F
 - Excess pain or swelling of the calf
 - You significantly injure your operative body part