

Postoperative Instructions: Wrist Carpal Tunnel Release

When You Get Home:

Rest for the remainder of the day.

Be Safe- stay in the care of responsible adult the first 24 hours.

Elevate the arm on one to two pillows for the first 2 days.

Use Ice as much as possible:

20 minutes on/20 minutes off for regular ice packs/frozen peas, with a towel or cloth between you and the ice
If you are using a Cold Therapy unit, use it according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Pain Medication:

Take your pain medication- it's better to stay ahead of the pain.

Oral Narcotic pain medicines (Vicodin/Hydrocodone, Percocet, Tramadol, Codeine) help with pain, but can cause:

Drowsiness: Be Safe, don't drive, operate machinery, don't mix it with alcohol.

Stomach upset: Take with food, or try over the counter Zantac or Tums.

Constipation: Drink enough fluids, use fiber supplements (Metamucil, Senokot)

Take Prune juice or Milk of Magnesia if still constipated after 2 days

You may take anti-inflammatory medication to help with pain and swelling.

Some patients are prescribed Toradol (Ketorolac): take every 6 hours for 4 days.

Ok to take with Pain Medications, not with other anti-inflammatories

After 4 days of Toradol, you can take other anti-inflammatory medicines like:

Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Naproxen (Aleve), Lodine, Mobic, Celebrex

Go easy on the anti-inflammatory medications if you have stomach problems.

Splint and Wound Care:

You will be in a postoperative splint for the first week.

You will be also in a sling, which helps support the arm, and keeps it elevated to help with swelling.

Keep the postoperative splint clean and dry.

You may take a shower, but use a heavy plastic bag and tap the top around the arm to keep water from getting in.

Use a shower chair or plastic shower chair to sit on in the shower.

At your first postoperative visit we will remove the splint and remove your sutures.

It can be common to have improved feeling in the fingers right after surgery, then some numbness returns.

This can be a common feeling as the nerve starts to heal.

Exercises: Begin exercises immediately:

Move your thumb and fingers around many times during the day

Physical therapy will give you gentle exercises starting several weeks after surgery.

Activities and Restrictions:

You'll be getting around your house well within a few days.

Resume light activities (walking, etc.) after a few days.

You need to limit any heavy activities to allow the surgery and incision to heal.

Driving: Only after you are SAFE, which means:

Off pain medications, and able to control a vehicle safely

It can be difficult to control a car with one arm in a sling or splint.

Problems or Questions? Call us at 925.600.7020

Feel free to call us if you have any concerns, or for:

Unrelenting pain, or increasing swelling or numbness or high fevers (over 101.5)

Continuous drainage or bleeding that is soaking your dressing

Chest pain, shortness of breath