

Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery

Patient Care Instructions

General Information

Carpal Tunnel syndrome occurs when the median nerve is compressed. This may be related to repetitive stress, trauma, or inflammatory disease the cause of formation of scar tissue or adhesions around the nerve. Neurolysis, is freeing of the nerve from the surrounding structures, which relieves pain and restores sensation and function. This procedure is an outpatient procedure. You will need someone to accompany you to drive you home.

Pre-Operative Guidelines

Smoking should be stopped a minimum of 4 weeks prior to surgery. Smoking should be avoided for at least 4 weeks after surgery as well. Smoking can greatly interfere with healing and lead to postoperative complications.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery. This includes no water, gum or hard candy. Blood pressure and/or heart medications can be taken with a sip of water as directed by your prescribing physician.

If you take medication for diabetes, then confirm with your prescribing physician how to manage these medications prior to surgery.

If you are prone to nausea or motion sickness let your anesthesiologist know on the day of surgery. Medications can be started prior to surgery or during surgery to help improve your postoperative experience.

Post-Operative Care

You will be given pain medications, please take them as prescribed. You may take Tylenol only but do not exceed 3000 mg per day. The pain medication I prescribe has Tylenol in it so it must be calculated into the daily dose. Do not consume alcohol while taking pain medication.

Take a stool softener/laxative, such as Colace, Biscodyl, or Milk of Magnesia, until bowels begin to function normally after surgery. A combination of anesthesia and pain medication usually makes this necessary for a few days.

Keep your arm elevated for the first 2 days after surgery.

You may resume a normal diet after surgery. Do follow a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids.

Activity Restrictions

Walking is encouraged shortly after the operation and can be increased over the first 2 weeks. Light cardiovascular exercise can be gradually resumed after 3 weeks with all activities to be progressed over the next 3 weeks.

Do not lift anything heavier than 10 lbs. for 4 weeks.

Do not drive until you are no longer taking oral pain medications.

Limit the use of the operative hand and leave all dressing in place until you are seen in clinic.

Incision care

You will have sutures in place that will be removed in about 1-2 weeks.

You can shower after surgery but keep the dressings dry and they should remain in place for until instructed to be removed by your surgeon. You can use a plastic bag to cover the operative hand in the shower.

Once the dressing has been removed you can wash the incision with warm soapy water but do not submerge the incision in water. If desired, you may apply a dry dressing daily to the incision after showering.

Post-Operative Expectations

Nerve symptoms may take weeks or even months to resolve depending on injury. In some instances, not all symptoms resolve.

Pain around the incision should subside around 6 or more weeks.

You expect some slight bloody oozing from the suture lines and swelling of the incisions. Gauze may be applied if it is bothersome.

When to Call the Office

If you have increased swelling and or redness around the incision.

If you have severe pain not relieved by pain medication.

If you have any side effects from medication: rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.

If you have fever over 101.

If you have yellow or green drainage from an incision or notice foul odor.

For medical questions please call 817-702-9100.

Follow-up Care and Appointments

You will be seen approximately 1 week after your surgery. If for some reason you do not have an appointment scheduled, please call 817-702-9100.