

Carpal Tunnel Release - Home Care Instructions

Stephen Hiatt, M.D.



General anesthesia / IV sedation: For the remainder of the day, plan to relax. A feeling of dizziness, light-headedness or drowsiness is not unusual. Move cautiously, as fast movements can make this feeling worse. If you have been lying down, sit up slowly and pause briefly before standing. We strongly suggest that a responsible adult be with you until tomorrow morning for your comfort and safety. You should not make any legal decisions for the next 24 hours.

1. Wound Care

- It is okay to remove your dressing in 48 hours.
- You may shower after the surgical dressing is removed. Gently wash the incisions with soap and water, then rinse and pat dry. You may apply a Band-Aid over the incision.
- **NO TUB BATHS, POOLS, OR HOT TUBS.**
- **DO NOT** apply any ointments, creams or lotions around your incisions.

2. Activity

- It is okay to start moving your wrist and fingers.
- Do not lift anything heavier than an eight ounce glass of water until sutures are removed.
- Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication.

3. Special Instructions

- **Keep the operative arm elevated above heart level** as much as possible to decrease swelling.
- *****DO NOT SMOKE OR USE TOBACCO. TOBACCO PRODUCTS INHIBIT WOUND HEALING.*****

4. Diet

- Start a light diet today (i.e. soup, Jell-O, toast). If no nausea or vomiting, you may resume a normal diet.
- In case of nausea and/or vomiting, reduce diet to fluids low in acid (water, sports drinks, clear sodas). As you are able to tolerate the fluids, gradually increase your diet.

5. Medication

- Take prescribed narcotic pain medication as needed. Exercise caution during walking or climbing stairs.
- Avoid taking narcotics on an empty stomach, as this can cause nausea and/or vomiting.
- Do not take additional Tylenol with the pain medication. Your pain meds have Tylenol in it.
- Narcotics cause constipation. Drink plenty of fluids. Take an over-the-counter laxative as needed.

6. Follow-up Care

- Follow up with Dr. Hiatt in 10-14 days. Call to schedule an appointment if not already arranged.

7. NOTIFY PHYSICIAN IF:

- **Excessive bleeding or drainage at the surgical site**
- **Fever over 101 degrees**
- **Numbness, tingling, or changes in color to the affected arm**
- **Excessive redness and/or unusual drainage at the surgical site**
- **Drainage at the surgical site that continues after one week post-op**
- **Increasing or unrelieved pain**
- **Persistent nausea and/or vomiting**
- **Unable to urinate for 6-8 hours after surgery**

8. REPORT TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IF:

- **Your arm suddenly becomes numb or pale.**
- **You experience sudden onset of severe chest pain or shortness of breath.**

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