

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome



You have been diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome related to numbness and tingling of the hand. The carpal tunnel is a narrow space in the wrist that contains the median nerve. It is surrounded by the bones of the wrist (carpals) and a thick tendon sheath. Friction will cause the tendon sheath to swell and enlarge limiting the space within the carpal tunnel. As a result, the median nerve becomes compressed leading to numbness and tingling within the wrist and hand. Symptoms can be treated conservatively, with night splinting, medications, and cortisone injections. However, carpal tunnel syndrome does not resolve on its own and worsens over time.

An EMG (Electromyograph) is a nerve test that is ordered to determine the severity of your symptoms. Once you have been diagnosed with severe carpal tunnel, it is indicated you proceed with surgical intervention.

SURGERY- ENDOSCOPIC CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE

Endoscopic carpal tunnel release is recommended as the incision site is smaller and recovery time is faster. An instrument called an endoscope enters the incision site in order to visualize the images of the carpal tunnel so that the surgeon can make a small cut within the tendon sheath relieving the pressure on the median nerve. This procedure is usually performed under Local Mac anesthesia which means you will be asleep for the procedure under light sedation (less than required for general anesthesia). Your procedure will take approximately 1 hour- including recovery time. You will also be required to have a driver the day of surgery.

Dr. Robert P. Bruce, MD
If you have any questions, please call: (913) 381-5225



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WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

Depending on your job duties, you may be able to return to work under certain restrictions-provided you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication (You may wean into over the counter Tylenol, Ibuprofen, or Aleve for your symptoms as tolerated). You will need to avoid heavy lifting and submerging your hand in water until after your post-operative appointment with your surgeon. We suggest you speak with your employer regarding job demands to agree on an expected time of return.

Pain medication will be prescribed for post-operative pain relief. You will slowly wean from this medication over time as your symptoms subside. You may also experience some bruising and/or swelling. These symptoms may be alleviated through Ibuprofen or Aleve, elevation, and ice. (Please do not take additional Tylenol if you are taking narcotic pain medication; this already has Tylenol). Your digits will be free to perform normal activities of daily living and it is recommended that you keep your digits moving to prevent swelling after surgery; however, we suggest you refrain from repetitive gripping and heavy lifting until after your sutures have been removed.

You may remove your post-operative bandage after 48 hours to shower and wash your hands. You may get the surgical site wet, but should still not submerge the site.

Following your hand surgery, it may be difficult to open your medication bottles. If you prefer, you may request non-childproof bottles from your pharmacist when dropping off prescriptions. However, please consider the risks if you have small children in your home or if any small children may be accessible to these medications.

REASONS TO CALL OUR OFFICE

Please call our office if you experience abnormal drainage (yellow or green), fever over 101°F, chills, increasing redness around the incision site, or side effects from your pain medication such as prolonged nausea.

Please contact the office if you wish to take extended time for recovery or if your job requirements do not allow you to return. You may file FMLA or Short-Term Disability paperwork. Contact our office at 913-652-6348 with any questions or concerns.

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