

# J. Clinton Walker, MD

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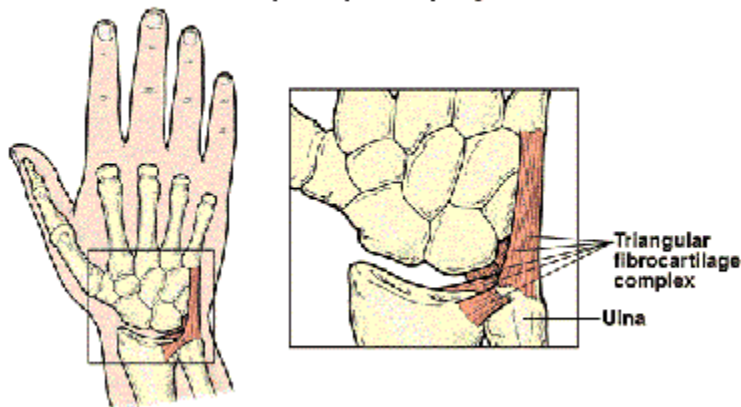
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*If you have any questions or concerns, call the office.*

## **Triangular Fibrocartilage Complex (TFCC) Injuries**



### **TFCC- Triangular Fibrocartilage Complex**

The TFCC is a triangular-shaped cartilage located between the hand and the wrist along the small finger side of the hand. It serves as a cushion and support for this area of the hand. An injury to this tissue can range from a mild sprain to a complete tear- an MRI is used to correctly diagnose the severity. Symptoms may be treated conservatively by immobilizing the wrist to allow for optimal healing. If the symptoms cannot be resolved with conservative measures/or cortisone injection, then surgical repair may be warranted.

### **Surgery- Wrist Arthroscopy**

Most TFCC injuries can be treated arthroscopically, meaning a small instrument called an arthroscope is used rather than making a large open incision. This makes for a faster recovery time and minimal scarring. Your surgeon will smooth down all fraying or uneven structures of the area. This procedure is usually performed under general anesthesia which means you will be asleep for the procedure. Your procedure will take approximately 2- 4 hours- including recovery time. You will also be required to have a driver the day of surgery.

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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.

This procedure can be painful, so it is expected that you will require narcotic pain medication for the first couple of days. You may wean off the pain medication as tolerated once symptoms begin to subside. Your bandages will cover your hand up your arm but will leave your fingers free for movement. It is recommended that you keep your digits moving to prevent swelling after surgery; however, we suggest you refrain from heavy lifting until after your post-operative appointment. 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).

You will be expected to keep your bandages clean and dry until your post-operative appointment with your surgeon 10- 14 after surgery. At the time of your post-operative visit your splint and bandages will be removed and pending on the details of your specific surgery you may require casting, splinting, or motion exercises at this time.

Following your hand surgery, it may be difficult to open your medication bottles. If you prefer, you may request NON child-proof 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

Your post-operative splint will allow for fluctuating swelling following surgery. However, if the splint feels too tight you may remove the outer wrap and replace this wrap with an ACE wrap that is less tight. This will be removed at your post-operative visit with your surgeon.

If you are placed into a cast, you will need to monitor your swelling at home. If your cast begins to feel too tight, be sure to elevate above heart level, ice (above and below the cast), and take anti-inflammatories to control your swelling. Contact the office if you have concerns about your cast or wish to discuss alternative anti-inflammatory medication.

**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.**