



Post Operative Instructions: Carpal Tunnel Release

ACTIVITY/SPLINT

- You may use the hand to do light activities and range of motion exercises as tolerated.

DRESSING & INCISIONS

- A small amount of red-tinged drainage on the dressing during the first 2 days is normal.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry; protect it while bathing or showering.
- Remove the dressing 4 days after surgery.
- You may apply Band-Aids to the incisions or leave them open to air.
- Do not apply Bacitracin or other ointments.
- Avoid soaking in pools, lakes, hot tubs, or the ocean until sutures are removed and the incision is fully healed.

PAIN & INFLAMMATION

Ice

- Apply ice wrapped in a dry towel 20 minutes at a time, several times per day for the first week, then as needed.

Elevation

- Keep your operative wrist/hand **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 7 days. It is normal for your fingers to swell in the days following surgery.

Pain Medications

- Take your prescribed medications as directed.

Tylenol (Acetaminophen)

- First-line for pain.
- Take 1000 mg every 6-8 hours.
- Do not exceed 1000 mg per dose or 4000 mg per day (limit to 3000 mg/day if you have liver issues).
- Do not drink alcohol while taking Tylenol.

Methocarbamol

- Helps with pain and muscle spasms.
- Take every 6 hours as needed.

Oxycodone

- For moderate to severe breakthrough pain only.
- Use sparingly and wean off as soon as possible.

Common side effects include:

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Do not drive or operate machinery.
- Itching: Benadryl may help.
- Constipation:

- Use stool softeners (e.g., Senna-Docusate) or OTC options (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc).
- Avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, and yogurt (may worsen constipation).
- Light walking helps stimulate bowel function.

Vitamin C: 500mg twice daily x 60 days to prevent development of complex regional pain syndrome

Refills:

- If you think you will need a refill, you must request it during regular weekday office hours.

EMERGENCIES

You must have someone stay with you during the first 48 hours after surgery.

Call the clinic or the on-call orthopedist if:

- Drainage soaks the dressing, increases, smells foul, or if incisions become red, warm, or very painful.
- You develop a fever $>101.5^{\circ}\text{F}$ or chills.
- You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or difficulty breathing.

FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Schedule a follow-up appointment at ~2 weeks postoperatively for a wound check, suture removal, and review of your surgery (if not already scheduled).