

# Post Operative Instructions for Carpal Tunnel Release

Oregon Medical Group Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Clinic

1435 G Street, Springfield, OR 97477 541-242-4812

Robb Larsen, M.D.

Mark Fletcher, M.D.

Alec Fedorov, M.D.

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## Call our office if you have any of the following:

- Fever over 101 degrees.
- Yellow, green or foul smelling drainage
- A large red area around the incisions.
- You suspect an allergic reaction to medications or dressing materials. This could be shortness of breath, a rash or redness, hives, etc.

## Dressings/Bandages:

- Your dressing and splint applied in the operating room should remain on, dry, and intact for 3 days following surgery. You may shower, but keep the dressing dry by covering the area with a plastic bag.
- Following removal of the dressing you may shower and let water run over the incisions. Do not soak the area in a bath or swimming pool until the wounds have completely healed, usually 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- Protect the wound with a band-aid as needed.

## Medication:

- Take your regular medications as prescribed.
- You have been given a prescription for pain medication. Please take according to the instructions. If your pain becomes too severe, don't try to "tough it out". Call our office if you have severe pain that doesn't respond to pain medication.
- **Some pain medications contain Tylenol. DO NOT take additional Tylenol without discussing with your surgeon. This can lead to liver failure.**
- **Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are on narcotic pain medication.**
- Sometimes pain medication causes nausea. If this is severe and doesn't go away, call our office.
- Pain medication can cause constipation. Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice. Take milk of magnesia if you become constipated, or use a stool softener such as Dulcolax.

□ **Activity for patients of Dr. Larsen or Dr. Fletcher**

- Minimize activity on the day of surgery.
- Elevate the surgical hand and apply an ice pack every hour for 20 minutes, for the first 72 hours. After that, elevate and apply ice 2-3 times/day until the swelling goes down. Put a thin towel between the ice bag and your skin. **Do NOT use heat.**
- Once the splint/dressing is removed, you may use the hand and wrist as tolerated. You are encouraged to bend the wrist, elbow and fingers as soon as the splint is removed.
- Avoid lifting, pushing, or pulling any object greater than 10 pounds for the first 10-14 days. Do not use exercise equipment until your doctor allows you to do so.
- Avoid driving until you are no longer on pain medication and feel you can safely operate a vehicle.

□ **Activity for patients of Dr. Fedorov**

- Minimize activity on the day of surgery.
- Elevate the surgical hand as much as possible for the first few days. Apply an ice pack to the palm side of the splint every hour for 20 minutes, for the first 72 hours. After that, elevate and apply ice 2-3 times/day until the swelling goes down. Put a thin towel between the ice bag and your skin. **Do NOT use heat.**
- You will be in a splint after surgery. At your post-op visit, about 2 weeks after surgery, the splint and sutures will be removed, and you will be given a removable brace to wear.
- Wear your brace all the time, but do remove it several times a day to move your hand and fingers. Bend the wrist forward and backward, and stretch your fingers. You may get your wound wet under running water, but don't soak your hand under water.
- Four weeks after surgery, remove the paper strips that were applied at your last visit. Apply vitamin E lotion to your wound several times a day. At this time you may soak your hand under water. Discontinue using the brace, and use your hand normally.

Diet:

- Resume your regular diet. Drink plenty of fluids, but stay away from alcoholic and caffeinated fluids. Try to stay away from smoking.

Your Post-op Appointment:

- Should be scheduled for 10-14 days after surgery. Call 541-242-4812 if you don't have a post-op appointment date and time. Your sutures will be removed at this visit.

Special Instructions:

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