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**CENTRAL INDIANA  
ORTHOPEDICS**

## **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE SURGERY**

### **DIET**

- Begin with clear liquids and light foods (Jellos, soups, etc)
- Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated

### **WOUND CARE**

- Maintain your operative dressing. Loosen bandage if swelling of the elbow, wrist, or hand occurs.
- It is normal for the hand/wrist to bleed and swell following surgery -- if blood soaks onto the bandage, do not become alarmed -- reinforce with additional dressing.
- Remove surgical dressings on the 2nd post-operative day -- if minimal drainage is present, apply band-aids or a clean gauze dressing over incisions and change daily.
- To avoid infection, keep surgical incisions clean and dry. You may shower by placing a large garbage bag over your hand/wrist starting the second day after surgery -- **NO IMMERSION** of operative extremity/site (i.e. bath/pool/hot tub)

### **MEDICATIONS**

- A regional nerve block of the operative arm/hand is typically performed by your anesthesiologist to help with pain control post-operatively. This can last for 6-24 hours after the surgery
- Most patients will require some narcotic pain medication for a short period of time. This can be taken as directed on the bottle.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To decrease the side effects, take medication with food. If constipation occurs, consider taking an over-the-counter laxative
- If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, contact the office to possibly have your medication changed
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking narcotic medication
- Ibuprofen 200-400mg (i.e. Advil) may be taken in-between the narcotic pain medication doses to help smooth out post-operative 'peaks and valleys', reduce overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication usage

### **ACTIVITY**

- Do not engage in activities which increase pain/swelling (grabbing, pulling, pushing, etc of the operative hand) over the first 7-10 days following surgery
- **NO DRIVING** until instructed otherwise by physician
- May return to sedentary work **ONLY** or school 3-4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable

### **ICE THERAPY**

- Begin immediately after surgery. **DO NOT** apply ice or ice unit directly to skin, have a barrier
- Use ice packs every 2 hours for 20-30 minutes daily until your first post-operative visit.



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## **EXERCISE**

- Begin pendulum, elbow, wrist, and hand exercises starting 24 hours after surgery. Complete 3-4 times per day until your first post-operative visit
- Discomfort and stiffness is normal for a few days following surgery.
- Formal hand therapy will begin 2-3 days after your surgery day

## **EMERGENCIES\*\***

- Contact Dr Camilleri or his assistant Becca Corya at 800-622-6575 if any of the following are present:
  - Painful swelling or numbness
  - Unrelenting pain
  - Fever (over 101 degrees -- it is normal to have a low grade fever for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
  - Redness around the incisions
  - Color change in wrist/hand/fingers
  - Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (small amount of drainage is expected)
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Inability to urinate 8 hours after surgery
  - Excessive nausea/vomiting

**\*\* If you have an emergency after office hours or on the weekend, contact 800-622-6575 and you will be connected to our pager service. They will contact Dr Camilleri or one of his partners if he is unavailable. Do not call the hospital or surgery center.**

**\*\* If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room**