

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS AFTER OPEN CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE J. THEODORE SCHWARTZ, JR., M.D.

DO NOT DRIVE OR OPERATE MACHINERY FOR 24 HOURS.

Some anesthetics have delayed metabolism and can interfere with the ability to perform these tasks.

DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES FOR 24 HOURS.

DO NOT MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS OR SIGN LEGAL DOCUMENTS UNTIL THE NEXT DAY.

DO NOT EAT HEAVY OR LARGE MEALS UNTIL THE NEXT DAY.

A heavy meal may be difficult to digest. Spicy and greasy foods should be avoided.

DO NOTIFY PHYSICIAN IF YOU HAVE NOT VOIDED WITHIN SIX HOURS.

General Information: During surgery, a local anesthetic was injected into your wrist. So after the surgery, **your fingers may be numb the first 4 to 48 hours.**

Pain Management

Take the prescribed medication for pain. Follow the directions on the package. If there are any questions regarding the pain medication, please call our office. If you wish, you may take over-the-counter pain medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Nuprin, or Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve) instead. **It is recommended that you take pain medication with food.**

Icing and Elevation

To decrease swelling, it is helpful to elevate your hand above your heart and apply an ice pack to your palm for the first 24 hours. You may use a sling if you wish for the first 24 hours after surgery, but remember a sling will typically keep your hand below your heart.

Dressings

Keep the dressing clean and dry. If the Ace bandage feels tight, unwrap the Ace bandage and rewrap it so it feels comfortable. Do not change the dressing, remove the splint, or apply bacitracin to the wound unless specifically instructed.

Showering

Keep your dressing dry.

Activities

The day following surgery, you may perform light activities with the hand, including using eating utensils, light writing or occasional keyboarding. If your hand is comfortable, you may drive. Do not lift anything weighing greater than 12 ounces. Do not perform strenuous pinching, pulling, or grasping, yard work, or vacuuming for the first 10 days following surgery. You are encouraged to move your exposed fingers as soon as it is comfortable so that they do not become stiff.

Follow-up

You should have a follow-up appointment for approximately 14 days after surgery at which time you will be placed in a cast. If you do not have a follow-up appointment, please call the office to arrange one.

If something seems wrong or out of the ordinary, please contact the office at (925) 355-7350.

CALL PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY IF YOU:

- ✓ Observe excessive bleeding, drainage, redness, or swelling;
- ✓ Develop unexpected numbness, coldness, or change of color at operative site;
- ✓ Have extreme pain not relieved by prescribed pain medication, or a medication causes a reaction;
- ✓ Notice a foul odor emanating from surgical site, or have a temperature of 101° F or higher.
- ✓ If it is an emergency and you cannot reach your physician, go to the nearest emergency room or dial 911.