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CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE- Postoperative Instructions

Follow-up appointment: Our office will call you the next business day after surgery to schedule a postoperative visit (usually in about 10 days). At that time you will be given the opportunity to ask questions about your surgery or discuss any difficulties you may have.

About your dressing: Your hand is covered with a sterile dressing following the procedure, and this should be kept clean and dry for 72 hours. You may shower or bathe, but be sure that the dressing is covered with a plastic bag and out of the flow of water. You may change the dressing at any time if it becomes soiled or wet. Remove the dressing after three days and cover the wound with gauze or a large band aid if it continues to drain. The stitches used to close the wounds are made of nylon and will be removed when you return for your follow-up visit.

About pain and swelling: Some discomfort is to be expected. Your surgeon uses a local anesthesia surrounding the incision that will provide pain relief for 6-10 hours following surgery. The best way to control the discomfort is to keep the hand elevated (above the level of the heart) and apply ice (enclosed in a plastic bag and wrapped in a dry towel) to the hand for 20 minutes out of an hour, repeating as needed.

For mild to moderate pain, we advise using a non-narcotic medication such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) or one of the nonsteroidals (Motrin, Aleve, Advil) as long as you don't have contraindications to these medications.

For moderate to severe pain, narcotics may be used sparingly as prescribed. Please do not combine narcotic medication with alcoholic beverages. **Do not drive while taking narcotics.**

Postoperative activities: The fingers are left free so they can be moved as much as possible. Using the fingers immediately will speed up your recovery and help lessen the pain. Gradually begin to move the wrist and hand more as the pain subsides. Avoid any lifting greater than 5 pounds or repetitive activities for the first month or until cleared by your doctor.

Return to driving/work: Please do not drive for 24 hours following surgery. **OK to resume driving when you are no longer taking narcotics and can comfortably grip the steering wheel.** Return to work will depend on your work duties- this should be discussed with your surgeon.

Warning signs: Please call our office at (978) 534-6333 for fevers, chills, excess drainage, severe pain or any questions.