

# Post-op Instructions for Carpal Tunnel Release or Trigger Finger Release

These instructions compliment the information given by the nursing staff. They cover many common questions.

## Wound Care

- Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. If the ace wrap feels too tight, you may loosen it and re-wrap it.
- You may remove the ace bandage and dressing three days after surgery. Please leave the stitches intact. Cover the incision with dry gauze or a bandage. If you are working in a dirty environment, please cover the hand with a clean work glove.
- You may get the incision wet when showering 3 days after surgery. The shower should be brief and the wound patted dry with a clean towel. Please avoid soaking or submersion of the hand in dish water or while bathing for 3 weeks after surgery and until well healed.
- If you notice purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) from the wound, increasing redness, or you have a temperature of 101 or higher, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

## Pain and Swelling

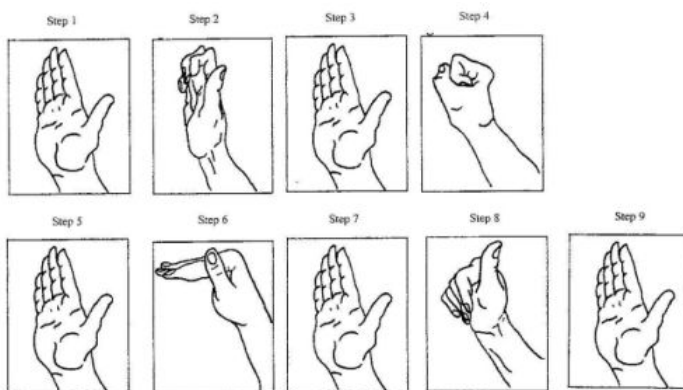
- To lessen pain and swelling, we recommend using ice after surgery. You may use an ice pack or ice in a zip lock bag with a towel between the ice and the surgical site. We recommend icing for 20 minutes, 4-5 times per day for the first 1-3 days. Do not place ice or cooling devices directly on the skin for prolonged periods of time as it may damage the skin.
- Swelling is common after surgery. To reduce swelling, elevation is very helpful. Elevate the hand above the heart level for the first 2-5 days after surgery. Elevation for 30 minutes every 2 hours is a good initial recommendation. Excessive pain and swelling should be reported to your surgeon.
- For baseline pain control, we recommend adults\* take Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 1000mg\*\* three times a day. If your prescription pain medication also contains Tylenol, you should reduce this. You should not take more than 3000mg of Tylenol in a 24-hour period. You may also supplement your pain medication by taking an anti-inflammatory medication such as Ibuprofen (Advil) or Naprosyn (Aleve) between Tylenol doses (unless you have been told you cannot take these medications, are taking a blood thinner or have a history of or develop stomach ulceration).
- If that is not adequate, prescription strength pain medication may be prescribed for after you leave the hospital. Wean off this medication as your pain allows, continuing the Tylenol and anti-inflammatory as tolerated. Prescription strength medications can cause constipation and you may want to use a stool softener. If a refill is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Refills will not be made after hours or on weekends, so please plan ahead.

\*Children under age 12 should take Tylenol 10mg/kg/dose

\*\*Tylenol 325mg: 3 tabs every 8 hours OR Tylenol 500mg: 2 tabs every 8 hours

## Exercises

Gentle hand and finger range of motion exercises can begin the day of surgery. Perform these three times a day, 10 repetitions. After the bulky dressing have been removed on post-op day three, you may start hand-strengthening exercises by squeezing a soft ball.



## Driving

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills (plain Tylenol is allowed). Also, you must feel strong and alert.

**Follow-up**

Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you at Chippewa Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine for approximately 10-14 days after surgery. Please call the office with any questions or concerns.

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