

Dr. Alford's Postoperative Instructions: Carpal Tunnel Release

DIET

Begin with clear liquids and light foods (jellos, soups, etc.), and progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.

WOUND CARE

Remove surgical dressing on the third post-operative day and apply band-aids or a clean dressing over incisions. **DO NOT PUT** any alcohol, lotions, or any other medications on your sutures. You can clean **AROUND** the area with a **CLEAN** washcloth and soap and water **ONLY**. To avoid infection, keep surgical dressing clean and dry – you may shower by placing a plastic bag over your hand starting the day after surgery – **NO** immersion of operative hand (i.e. bath). After you have removed the dressings on day 3, you may shower and carefully dry off your operative hand.

MEDICATIONS

During your surgery, a small amount of anesthetic was injected into your hand. This will make your fingers numb and last about 8 hours after the surgery, at which time your hand will begin to ache a little more. This is normal. It is common to require narcotic medication for a short while. Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication. Ibuprofen 200-400mg (i.e. Advil) can be taken in between the narcotic pain medication to reduce overall amount of pain medication required, and increase the time intervals between narcotic pain medication use.

ACTIVITY

Keep your surgical hand elevated above chest level when ever possible. To reduce swelling, flex and extend your fingers 10 times every hour while you are awake. Avoid situations which might require a strong grip with your surgical hand. You may not use your surgical hand for lifting heavy objects.

ICE THERAPY

Begin icing your palm immediately after surgery. Ice your palm 4-5 times a day for 20 minutes at a time. We recommend that you do this at least for the first 3 days.

EMERGENCIES

Contact Dr. Alford or his office at 401-738-3730 if any of the following are present: Persistent painful swelling or numbness (note that some swelling and numbness is normal the day of surgery), unrelenting pain, fever or chills, redness around incisions, color change in the hand (mild bruising is normal), continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected), excessive nausea/vomiting, or severe calf pain. If you have an emergency after office hours or on the weekend, contact our office (401-738-3730) and you will be connected to our page service – this will contact Dr. Alford or one of his covering partners if he is unavailable. If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention, proceed to the nearest emergency room.

FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS

If you have any other questions/concerns, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Alford's office at 401-738-3730. If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact the office as soon as possible to schedule an appointment. Typically post-operative appointments are made for 7-12 days following the date of surgery.