

John Reeves, M.D.

When You Get Home - Carpal Tunnel Release

- **When to Call Your Doctor:** Call the office if you have: 1. **Severe** pain that is not relieved by your pain medication. 2. Your dressing should become **saturated with blood or drainage**. 3. **Temperature above 101°**. (If you have a low grade fever 99° to 101° please deep breath and cough several times a day as well as drink plenty of fluids). 4. Redness and swelling that extends greater than 2 inches from the incision.
- **Wound Care:** Keep your incision clean and dry. If the dressing becomes tight you may loosen it. You may take a shower 1 day after surgery. Protect the dressing so it does not get wet. If the dressing becomes wet take it off and replace it with a clean dry dressing. You may remove the dressing for showers on day 3. **DO NOT SOAK YOUR HAND, OR SWIM FOR 3 WEEKS.**
- **Pain control at home:** You will have a prescription for pain medication to use as needed; the instructions will be on the bottle. ***Elevate the arm and use an ice pack over the incision for 20 minutes several times a day as needed for comfort.*** Mild pain can be treated with Tylenol, please follow directions on the bottle, noting total use in 24 hours. Discomfort is normal while you gradually return to normal activity, but pain is a signal to stop what you are doing or proceed more slowly.
- **Follow-up:** You will be seen in the office approximately 1 week after surgery. Your incision will be examined and sutures/ staples will be removed. Your first follow-up is usually with the Nurse Practitioner. This appointment time should be given to you upon discharge from the hospital. **If no appointment time is given, please call the office for an appointment.**
- **Activity after surgery:** Typically, you will be weaker and tire more easily when you first come home from the hospital. You may drive the day after surgery if you are not taking pain medication. Do not lift anything greater than 10-15 pounds; do not do repetitive movements with the operative hand until released to do so by the doctor. Sexual activity can normally be resumed the day after surgery in a position of comfort. *Return to work* and with what limitations will depend on what you do at work and how you feel. Occupational therapy may be recommended; this is usually about 4-6 weeks after surgery.
- **Diet:** You will need to increase your water, fluids and fiber. Pain medications and less than normal activity tend to cause constipation. You may take a mild laxative if needed.
- **Medication:** You will take medications as directed when you get home. You will be given a list at the hospital. Normally you resume your pre operative medication.