



Ellen Ervin
(1961-2012)

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POST OPERATIVE PATIENT INFORMATION

CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE

PROCEDURE

Your operation is done through the arthroscope, a small telescope. Dr. Higgins will make a small incision in your wrist, look inside your hand and wrist, and free the compressed nerve.

PAIN

Dr. Higgins has a very particular routine to help make you comfortable (not necessarily pain free) after surgery. This includes over the counter medication, prescription medication, and ice. Over the counter medication should be taken as directed in your surgery letter. You will be given prescriptions for medicine that will help control pain, nausea, infection, and inflammation when you go home. Have these filled at your local pharmacy or where your insurance plan has made arrangements. Please refer to the calendar given to you for instructions on when to take these medications. Although you will have a prescription for a strong narcotic medication, many patients are able to control the discomfort postoperatively with Extra Strength Tylenol and the anti-inflammatory medication when taken as recommended in the letter you receive prior to surgery. Please take the antibiotics as directed until all the medication is gone. Ice may be used to help with pain and swelling. Please keep a layer of cloth between the ice and your skin, not placing the ice directly on your skin.

BANDAGE

Steristrips, Band-Aids, a bulky pressure dressing and an ace bandage will be placed on your hand and arm. They will soak up any blood or fluid that may seep from the wound. All dressings (not steristrips or Band-Aids) may be removed the day after surgery. Leave the steristrips and Band-Aids on until they fall off by themselves. When you change the Band-Aids, never use Neosporin on the incision.

WOUNDS

The incision may be sore and some bruising may develop over the first several days following the surgery. This will go away and no special care is needed. A Band-Aid may be placed over the wound.

BATHING

It is safe to bathe 24 hours after surgery. Your skin will have a sticky orange substance on it from the cleansing solution used in surgery. This can be removed by using rubbing alcohol. To bathe, remove the dressing (not the steristrips or Band-Aids) and wash with regular soap and water. After you bathe, pat the Band-Aid dry, loosely reapply the ace bandage, and place the pad for the Cold Therapy System over the dressing.

ACTIVITY

Exercises are extremely important following arthroscopic surgery to help you regain motion, strength, and flexibility of your wrist. I encourage you to bend your wrist as normally as possible to accomplish this. You may use your operated hand for whatever movements and activities you desire as long as there is no pain. Pain should be your guide; do not try to work through it. If an activity is not painful, go ahead and use your hand as naturally as possible. You will begin physical therapy 1-3 days after surgery. Please refer to your pre-operative instructions for the date and time. If you have misplaced these instructions, please contact our office at 301-232-1050.

RESULTS

Surgery done through the arthroscope is very similar to the surgery done inside your wrist through a larger incision. Even though the incision is small, there has been an operation inside the wrist. Complete healing may take several weeks.

PRECAUTIONS

If you have a fever over 101, severe pain, redness in your knee, please contact the office at 301-232-1050. If it is after hours, please call 240-401-0019. Swelling, some drainage and some redness are normal.

FOLLOW UP

Your appointment to see Dr. Higgins or Kristine James has been made for about 1 week after your surgery. Please refer to your preoperative instructions for the date and time. If you have misplaced these instructions, please contact our office at 301-232-1050.