

Carpal Tunnel

Updated January 2020

WOUND CARE:

Dressings:

- You can remove your dressing 4 days after surgery. Cover incision with bandage or tensor wrap if desired.

Shower:

- You may shower at any time, keeping your dressing DRY.
- After dressing is removed, shower but keep out of direct spray of water and pat dry.
- Do not use any ointments on your incision.
- **NO soaking in bathtub/hot tub or pool for first 2-3 weeks and all scabs are gone from incision.**

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION:

- Excessive or worsening pain, increased redness around the incision site, drainage from incision that looks like pus and/or is foul smelling, if fever runs above 38.5°C.
- If any of the above symptoms occur call Central Alberta Orthopedics at 403-309-2001 or go to the emergency department right away.

CONTROL OF PAIN AND SWELLING:

Pain Medication:

- For the first few days take your pain medication and anti-inflammatories regularly as instructed, then wean as tolerated. Avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach.

Elevation:

- Keep your wrist elevated above the level of your heart as often as possible.

Sleep:

- To decrease swelling keep the affected hand elevated.

PREVENTING BLOOD CLOTS

- Make sure you get up and walk around as much as possible; mobilizing prevents clots.

Signs and Symptoms of Blood Clots:

- Severe and worsening pain and swelling in the calf muscle.
- Chest pain and/or shortness of breath / trouble breathing.
- If you have any symptoms, call Health Link at 8-1-1 or go to the emergency department right away.
- **Blood clots, if left untreated, have the potential to become LIFE THREATENING.**

Due to the anesthetic, for the next 24 hours: Do NOT drive, sign legal documents, provide child care on your own or consume alcohol.

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

- You will see a physiotherapist at your 2-week follow-up appointment.

POST OPERATIVE EXERCISES (START 1ST DAY AFTER SURGERY):

1. Begin to use your hand for everyday activities immediately after surgery.
2. To prevent stiffness, start the following immediately after surgery:
 - a. Elbow range of motion:
 - I. With elbow bent at 90°, bend and straighten elbow as though brushing something off the front of you. Repeat 30 times, 3 times per day.
 - b. Shoulder Range of Motion
 - I. Raise your arm as high as you can above your head, bending at the shoulder.

- II. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 30 times, 3 times per day.
- c. Grip Strengthening
 - I. Make as tight of a fist as you can.
 - II. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 30 times, 3 times per day.
 - III. The goal is to make a complete fist by your two-week appointment

EXPECTED RECOVERY:

- Return to:
 - o sedentary work 2-4 days after surgery
 - o light duties by 2-6 weeks post-op
 - o heavy labor at 6-12 weeks