



# UNION GENERAL ORTHOPEDICS & SPORTS MEDICINE

AFFILIATE OF: UNION GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEM

## Post-Op Instructions for Cubital Tunnel Release

Jacob B. Stirton, MD

### DIET

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

### WOUND CARE

- It is normal for the elbow to bleed and swell following surgery. If blood soaks onto the ACE bandage, do not become alarmed, reinforce with additional dressing.
- You may remove your dressing on post-op day #3 and replace with dry dressings daily until your first post-op visit in 2 weeks.
- To avoid infection, NO immersion of the operative arm (i.e.: bath or pool) until six weeks after surgery.
- Please do not place any ointments lotions or creams on the incisions.

### MEDICATIONS

- Local anesthetics are injected into the wound at the time of surgery. This will wear off within 8-12 hours. Patients commonly encounter more pain on the first or second day after surgery when swelling peaks.
- Some patients will require narcotic pain medication for a short period of time – I prescribe oxycodone which can be taken 1-2 tabs every 3 hours as needed for pain.
- To minimize the need for narcotics, I prescribe ibuprofen and Tylenol to be taken three times per day each for the first 2 weeks.
- Common side effects of the pain medication are nausea, drowsiness, and constipation. To decrease the side effects, take the medication with food. We prescribe a stool softener to help prevent constipation but be sure to drink plenty of water as well. If you are having problems with nausea and vomiting, we prescribe an antiemetic, Zofran. If this fails to resolve the issue please contact the office.
- Do not drive a car or operate machinery while taking the narcotic medication.
- Please avoid alcohol use while taking narcotic pain medication.



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## ACTIVITY

- You may use your arm for light work (i.e. lift no more than a cup of coffee) provided you can keep your dressings clean and you don't put too much pressure on your incision.
- A simple sling is provided for comfort only. Remove whenever you'd like.
- Gentle range of motion of the elbow is encouraged from 0-90 degrees until you are seen at your first post-operative visit.
- No heavy lifting until after your first post-op visit.
- May return to sedentary work ONLY or school immediately after surgery, if pain is tolerable.

## ICE THERAPY

- Icing is very important in the initial post-operative period and should begin immediately after surgery.
- Use ice packs for 20-30 minutes every 2 hours for the first few days after surgery can be helpful in limiting swelling and pain.
- You do not need to wake up in the middle of the night to change over the icepacks unless you are uncomfortable.

## EMERGENCIES

\*Contact Dr. Stirton's office at 706-439-6858 if any of the following are present:

- Fever (over 101° F – it is normal to have a low-grade fever (<100°) for the first day or two following surgery) or chills
- Redness around incisions
- Color change in foot or ankle
- Continuous drainage or bleeding from incision (a small amount of drainage is expected)

\*If you have any of the following emergencies that require immediate attention proceed to the nearest emergency room.

- Excessive nausea/vomiting
- Unrelenting pain or calf pain
- Difficulty breathing



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## **FOLLOW-UP CARE/QUESTIONS**

- If you do not already have a post-operative appointment scheduled, please contact our scheduler at 706-439-6858 to schedule.
- If you have any further questions please contact Dr. Stirton's office.