

Discharge Instructions for Carpal Tunnel Release



You had a carpal tunnel release procedure to help ease the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome. In carpal tunnel syndrome, a nerve in the wrist is compressed and irritated. This causes numbness and pain in the fingers and hand. Carpal tunnel release eases the compression of the nerve. Here are instructions that will help you care for your arm and wrist when you are at home.

Home care

- Don't grip objects tightly or lift with your affected arm.
- Wear your bandage, splint, or cast as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Always keep the dressing, splint, or cast dry and clean.
- When showering, cover your hand and wrist with plastic and use tape or rubber bands to keep the dressing, splint, or cast dry. Shower as needed.
- Use an ice pack, bag of frozen peas, or something similar wrapped in a thin towel on your wrist. Use it to reduce swelling for the first 48 hours. Leave the ice pack on for 20 minutes, then take it off for 20 minutes. Repeat as needed.
- Keep your arm elevated above your heart for 24 to 48 hours after surgery.
- Do the exercises you learned, as instructed by your provider.
- Take pain medicine as directed.
- Don't drive until your healthcare provider says it's OK. Never drive while you are taking opioid pain medicine.
- Ask your provider when you can go back to work. If your job requires heavy lifting, you may not be able to start working again for several weeks.

Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment as directed by your healthcare provider.

Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have any of the following:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:

- A splint, cast, or dressing that is wet
- Increased bleeding or drainage from the cut (incision)

- Opening of the incision
- Fever of 100.4° F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Shaking chills
- Any new numbness in the fingers or thumb
- Blue hand or fingers
- Pain that gets worse with or without activity
- Redness, tenderness, or swelling of the incision that gets worse

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