Carpal Tunnel Release/Hand Surgery – Post-Op Instructions

Activity
You may feel sleepy for up to 24 hours from the sedation you received. Resume normal activities gradually.

For the next 24 hours you:
• Should not drive a vehicle, or operate machinery or power tools
• Should not drink any alcoholic beverages, including beer
• Should not make important decisions or sign important papers
• Should not smoke unsupervised
• Should avoid lifting anything over 10 pounds
• Should check with your physician when to resume driving, lifting or returning to work

Diet
• Begin with liquid and light foods, such as crackers, soup, gelatin and 7-Up.
• Avoid spicy, greasy or fried foods for 24 hours.
• Progress to your normal diet as tolerated.

Care of wound
• Keep dressing on and dry until seen by your physician.
• You may shower if arm is covered securely with a plastic bag.
• To prevent swelling, keep arm elevated at heart level or above for four days, either on pillows or with arm sling.
• May loosen elastic wrap/splint if fingers swell – even with elevation.
• Wear arm sling as directed by your physician.
• Exercise fingers using gentle range of motion.
• Apply ice to incisional area – one hour on, one hour off – for 24 to 48 hours as directed by your physician.

Medications
• Take pain medication as prescribed.
• Continue medications as prior to surgery, unless told differently.
• You may experience constipation after this surgery. Do not strain during a bowel movement. To help prevent constipation:
  – Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water per day (unless otherwise instructed).
  – Increase fiber in your diet. Some good sources of fiber are fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, beans and high-fiber cereals.
  – Take stool softeners if prescribed by your doctor.

Notify your doctor if you have:
• A fever above 101º F
• Pain that is not relieved by pain medication and/or elevation
• Fingers that turn cold or bluish, or have abnormal tingling or numbness
• Marked swelling of fingers, even if elastic wrap is loosened and after arm has been elevated
• Excessive bleeding from your surgical site
• Any questions

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.