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 101° 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