

CARPAL TUNNEL SURGERY

Surgery

The surgical procedure is performed in an operating room at a hospital or an outpatient surgery center. An anesthesiologist or a nurse anesthetist will provide your anesthesia. The anesthesia will be either intravenous sedation with local anesthetic in the hand or a Bier block regional anesthetic in which a local anesthetic is injected into your venous system of the affected extremity with a tourniquet inflated.

Recovery Room

The procedure takes approximately 60 minutes in the operating room. You will be observed for a brief period after the surgery in a recovery room setting. You may not drive yourself home. An ace wrap will hold the dressing in place. A narcotic pain reliever (Tylenol #3, Darvocet N-100 or Vicodin) is prescribed to help decrease the post-operative pain for the next 2-3 days. Take this medication **only** as needed.

Post Operative

The bandage should be kept on, clean and dry. We will change it at your visit to the office the week following surgery. Do not lift more than 2 lbs for 2 weeks with this hand.

Two weeks after surgery

The stitches will be removed at about 8-14 days after surgery.

Exercises the first week

Finger motion is encouraged by fully extending and flexing the digits. Exercise individual digits to obtain flexor tendon gliding by holding three fingers out straight and then flex the other into the palm. This should be performed every couple of hours and only takes a few seconds. Keep the elbow and shoulder limber.

Activity

Gentle grasping can be started after the stitches are removed and can gradually be increased. Four weeks after surgery, strengthening can be started with putty type exercises.

Return to Work

If not taking narcotic medication, it is possible to return to work the day after carpal tunnel surgery has been performed, but no significant lifting or grasping with the hand can be performed. 4-6 weeks after surgery most patients can return to their regular work activities. Patients should not drive while taking narcotics or if the bandage interferes with the ability to hold the steering wheel.

Make your appointments with the office and the hand therapy according to the post operative notes after surgery.