



## **Duke Orthopaedics: Upper Extremity Division**

*Christopher Klifto, MD & Alix Ackerman NP-C*

3609 SW Durham Dr, Durham, NC 27707

### **Discharge Instructions after Carpal and Cubital Tunnel Surgery**

#### **Dressings:**

- You may be given a sling after surgery. Utilize the sling until the nerve block wears off and you have full function of your operative arm.
- A soft dressing will be placed after surgery. Please keep in place for 3 days. After 3 days, you may remove the bandage and cover with Band-Aid only if the incision is not dry.
- The dressing **CANNOT** get wet for the first 3 days. If it gets wet, please contact the office for recommendation about wound care needs

#### **Pain Management/Medications:**

- You were given a block for your operative arm. The block can last up to 12 hours where you have no pain, but expect normal post-operative pain as the block is wearing off.
- You may use ice on the elbow/wrist through the dressing intermittently over the first 48 hours after surgery and as needed thereafter for pain and swelling control.
- Please resume all normal medications the day after surgery unless otherwise instructed.
- Pain medicine has been prescribed for you. Use your medication liberally as directed over the first 48 hours, and then begin to taper your use.
  - No driving or drinking alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication
- You may take Extra Strength Tylenol or Tylenol in place or in conjunction with your prescribed pain medication. Do not exceed 4,000mg Tylenol per day (including Tylenol in certain prescribed pain medications like Percocet or Norco)
- It is okay to take Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or Naproxen (Aleve) as needed for pain and inflammation

#### **Activity:**

- You are able to, and encouraged to, move your fingers hand, wrist, and elbow as you are able to once the block wears off (typically begin the day after surgery). There are no restrictions on the movements of the hand, wrist, or elbow.
- No lifting greater than 1-2 pounds.

Showering: cover arm with plastic bag and tape/rubber band to prevent ANY moisture getting to the dressing for the first 5 days. The patient may wet the incision in the shower or with hand washing beginning on postoperative day 5, but do not to soak the incision in water (bath, pool, ocean, etc.) for 3-4 weeks after surgery.

#### **Contact:**

- During business hours for urgent or routine questions, call Faith and Emily at the office: 919-403-3057
- After hours for emergent questions or concerns call and ask for the orthopaedic resident on call: 919-471-9622
- Contact the office or emergency on-call resident if you notice any of the following:
  - Excessive redness or warmth of the incisions



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- Drainage for more than 4 days after surgery
- Fever of more than 101.5 F
- Worsening numbness of the hand
- Pain, redness, and swelling in your leg

**-Go directly to the closest Emergency Room if you develop chest pain, difficulty breathing, or any complications that require immediate attention.**

Follow-up:

**You should have a post operative appointment about 14 days after your surgery. A post-op appointment should already be scheduled for you. If you do not have an appointment in 2 weeks or if you need to change the appointment, please call 919-471-9622.**