

## **Carpal Tunnel Release Discharge Instructions**

### **Care of the Surgical Site:**

- You will have gauze over the incision and it will be wrapped with an Elastocrepe bandage. This is to remain on until the surgeon tells you to remove it. The surgeon may choose to remove it at your first follow-up visit (you will be given specific instructions before you go home).
- Keep the dressing clean and dry until it is removed. When you are showering, put your hand into a plastic bag that is securely taped to prevent any water from getting on the dressing as recommended.
- When the dressing is removed, you may use a regular Band-Aid to cover the incision. Change this each time it gets wet.
- Keep the incision clean and dry. Do not soak it in water and if you are doing dishes – wear a rubber glove.
- You are to keep your hand above the level of your heart as much as possible. When you are sleeping, use pillows to help with this. Slings are not recommended.
- You may use your hand, but do not try to lift anything too heavy without having your other hand supporting the object. Wiggle your fingers and gently open and close the hand hourly to keep your fingers from stiffening up.
- If your surgeon has suggested that you wear a splint, do so as directed.
- Take any prescribed medication as directed.

### **Diet:**

- There is no change in diet required.

### **Activity:**

- No driving for 24 hours after surgery. You need both hands to drive your vehicle safely, so if you are unable to fully grip the steering wheel with the “big” dressing on, do not drive until it is removed. If your pain medications may make you drowsy, do not drive.
- The day of surgery, you will go home and rest. The normal activity of walking around your home will be enough for the first day. When you are lying or sitting down, do leg and breathing exercises at least every hour while you are awake.

- You should be able to resume most of your normal activities the day after your surgery..

**Follow-Up:**

- You will have to arrange your first follow-up appointment. The contact information will be given to you before you go home.
- Return to work plans will be discussed at that visit, if not already advised by your surgeon.

**CALL YOUR SURGEON OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IF YOU HAVE:**

- Fever or chills (temperature of 38.5 C/101 F or higher).
- Bleeding that does not stop with firm pressure being applied to the incision/cut.
- Redness and yellow-green pus coming from the incision/cut.
- An incision/cut that is opening up.
- Nausea or vomiting that is not relieved by anti-nausea medication (Gravol).
- Pain that is not relieved by the prescribed pain medication when taken as directed.
- New or worsening numbness or tingling in the hand.

**IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO REACH YOUR SURGEON, go directly to the Emergency Department for medical attention.**