



Surgery Information

Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery

Please read the following information before SURGERY, so that you will be prepared and understand your surgery and the post-operative process.

Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery

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Common questions you may have concerning your surgical procedure:

1. How long will I stay in the hospital?

To be discharged home, a patient must be able to 1. eat & drink; 2. urinate; & 3. only require pain medications by mouth. Most patients go home the same day.

2. Will I need a brace?

Some patients may be instructed to wear a wrist splint after surgery. The brace should be worn at all times.

3. What is the approximate time it will take me to recover?

While everyone's pain tolerance, healing times and medical conditions differ; most patients will recover from a carpal tunnel release within 3 to 4 weeks.

4. How long before I can return to work?

It depends on the type of work you perform and the duties involved with your job. Activity restrictions and duty limitations will be discussed with you during your first post-operative visit. In general, most patients can return to work with light duty restrictions within 2 to 3 days of surgery. Those patients who have heavy duty and labor intensive jobs can expect to be out 4 to 6 weeks.

5. When can I drive?

Most patients can drive the day after discharge from the hospital; as long as they do not have any physical limitations. Furthermore, we recommend patients DO NOT drive while under the influence of any pain medications.

6. How do I take care of my surgical incision?

Your incision will be closed with either sutures or Steri-Strips (*butter-fly stitches*). These should be removed between 7 – 10 days at your first post operative visit. A dry dressing will be placed over the incision at the time surgery. Leave this dressing in place for 24 – 48 hours; then leave incision open to air and without a dressing (*it is ok to cover the incision for 2 to 3 additional days if a small amount of bleeding persists*). You may get your incision wet in the shower after dressing is removed.

7. Will I have a surgical drain?

No.

8. Will I need physical therapy after surgery?

Not initially; however, Dr Weber, may decide to refer you for rehab after 4 -6 weeks.

9. How long will my sutures stay in place?

Sutures or Steri-Strips will be removed 7 - 10 days after surgery at your first follow up visit.

10. How much weight can I lift?

Recommend you do not use the hand surgery was performed on until cleared by Dr Weber.

11. How long before I can fly in a plane?

Most patients are free to travel 2 – 3 days after surgery. Keep in mind; you will not be able to carry any luggage with the surgery hand.

12. How long before I can take a bath at home?

No submersion or soaking the surgery hand/wrist in water such as a bath, hot tubs or swimming pool until your incision has completely healed: approximately 2 to 3 weeks.

13. How long before I can shower at home?

You may get your incision wet in the shower after dressing is removed 2 – 3 days after surgery.

14. Do I need to be on a stool softener?

Narcotic medications can increase your risk of constipation. If you have a history of constipation and are taking narcotics, we may recommend you take a stool softener.

15. Will I be able to go swimming?

Yes, approximately 2 - 3 weeks after surgery you may swim.

16. When will my pain improve?

Every patient's pain tolerance and medical conditions vary. In general, many patients have immediate improvement in their pain. It is not uncommon to have soreness, swelling and discomfort around the surgical incision for several weeks after surgery.

17. Call Dr. Weber's office for any of the following:

- fever >101.5 degrees
- persistent bleeding
- increased swelling or blue extremity/hand
- redness or heat around surgical incision
- increasing pain

18. Go to the ER for the following:

- respiratory distress
- chest pain
- leg swelling