

Postoperative Guidelines for an Ulnar Nerve Release

Incision care

- Your incision is closed with skin glue, which will eventually come off with time.
- It may also be closed with sutures (also called “stitches”) on the outside of your skin. These will be removed at your follow up appointment. If you have visible sutures, please leave them intact.
- You may remove the dressing on the 2nd day after surgery
- You may get the incision wet showering after the dressing is removed. Do not scrub your wound, but gently cleanse it and pat dry.
- Do not submerge the incision into water or a tub for 6 weeks after surgery and scabs are absent.
- Leave the wound open to dry unless otherwise directed.
- It is normal to have a small amount of brown to reddish colored ooze for a few days.
- Do not apply ointments or creams to the incision.

Pain and Swelling Expectations

- It is normal to expect pain around the incision. That is why we prescribe medication to ease you through the healing process.
- This pain will get better with time as your body heals, so it is important to be patient as your body is healing.
- Swelling is expected after surgery. To reduce swelling, elevation is very helpful. Elevate the hand above the heart level for the first few days after surgery. Elevate for 30 minutes every 2-3 hours.
- It may take up to 1 year for the nerve to fully heal. During this time, it is normal to experience numbness, intermittent periods of pain, and tingling. However, it should not be worse than it was prior to surgery. You may also notice some numbness near the incision and elbow region. This will improve with time.

Medications

- You will be given a prescription for a pain medication.
- Do not take pain medication on an empty stomach. This may make you feel nauseated.
- Do not drink alcohol if you are taking pain medication.
- Patients usually require these medicines for at least 2 weeks after surgery.

- If you feel that your pain is well tolerated, you may begin to wean yourself off of your pain medication sooner than your post-op visit.
- Because pain medication can cause constipation, it is important to have stool softeners and laxatives at home such as Colace or Senna to prevent constipation. Take the stool softener daily and use the laxative as needed
- If you still have constipation after using these medicines, you may use an over-the-counter suppository or enema.

Medications to avoid

- NO blood thinners such as Aspirin, Coumadin, Warfarin, Xarelto, Plavix, etc. for 5-7 days after your surgery. We will tell you when you may resume your blood thinners.

Restrictions

- Try to limit use of the elbow where you had surgery. NO lifting using the arm that had the operation for 4-6 weeks.
- You may use your arm to dress yourself and do self-care activities.
- Be careful to protect the incision from hitting against any hard surfaces.
- You may drive as long as you are not taking narcotic pain medication.
- It is ok to ride as a passenger if you are taking narcotic pain medication.
- If you are unable to work due to these restrictions, please let us know if we need to complete any paperwork for your employer.

Diet

- It is important to remember to eat and drink fluids so that your body may properly heal.
- If you are experiencing nausea, follow a “BRAT diet” which is Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Toast and advance as tolerated

Smoking

- Smoking constricts your blood vessels which carry oxygen and nutrients to your healing tissue and muscles. This may impair healing.
- Carefully consider quitting smoking during this time. If you would like help in smoking cessation, please let us know.

Call our office if you have any of these symptoms:

- Fever > 101 degrees



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- Constipation that is not relieved by stool medications
- Redness, warmth, or significant drainage from your incision
- Shortness of breath or Chest Pain
- Pain, swelling, or redness in your calves
- Worsening weakness with hand strength

Follow up appointment

- We have scheduled a follow up appointment for you that is about two weeks after your surgery
- You will be provided with a card listing the date and time
- If you need this appointment changed, please call our office

If you are experiencing any problems or have any questions, please call Morgan at ext. 204