



(470) 293-9800
southernneurosurgery.com

YOUR SURGERY PACKET

Carpal Tunnel Release

Patient name: _____

Surgery date: _____

Surgery location: _____

Follow-up appointment: _____

What's in this packet

Part 1 - About Your Surgery: Carpal Tunnel Release	pages 2-3
Part 2 - After Your Surgery: Carpal Tunnel Release	pages 4-6
Part 3 - Questions After Surgery: Our 24/7 Virtual Assistant	page 7

Before you go

- Read Part 1 before surgery so you know what to expect.
- Keep Part 2 handy at home. It covers recovery, medicines and when to call us.
- You will also get a separate Surgery Day Guide for the hospital or surgery center where your operation is scheduled. It has arrival and parking details.
- Have a question after surgery? Our Virtual Assistant answers 24/7 (see Part 3).
- Bring this packet to your appointments and write down your questions.

Questions? Our Virtual Assistant is available 24/7:
md-aid.com/c/southernneurosurgery · or call (470) 293-9800

For chest pain or trouble breathing, call 911 or go to the nearest ER.

ABOUT YOUR SURGERY

Carpal Tunnel Release

Numb, tingling fingers that wake you at night, or a hand that drops things, can wear you down. Carpal tunnel release is one of the most common hand surgeries, and it can often correct the problem by giving the median nerve more room at the wrist.

What Is Carpal Tunnel Release?

The carpal tunnel is a narrow passage at the base of the palm, formed by the wrist bones and a tough band of tissue called the transverse carpal ligament. The median nerve and the tendons that bend your fingers run through it. In carpal tunnel syndrome, the nerve is squeezed, causing numbness and tingling in the thumb, index, middle and ring fingers, hand pain and weakness.

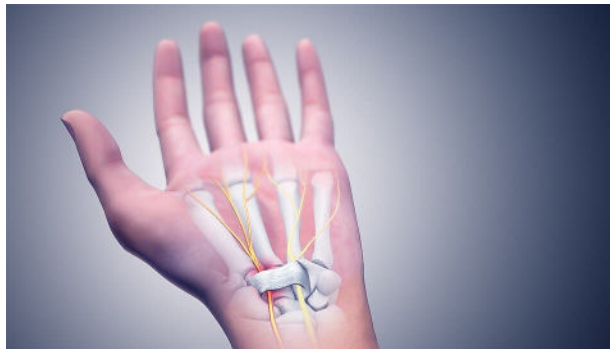


Image: Manu5, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Carpal tunnel release is surgery to cut the transverse carpal ligament. This opens the tunnel and takes pressure off the nerve. The ligament heals with more room for the nerve.

Why Do I Need This Procedure?

Surgery is usually recommended when you have:

- Numbness and tingling that keep coming back despite a splint and other treatment
- Symptoms that wake you up at night or interfere with work and daily activities
- Weakness, clumsiness or dropping things
- Shrinking of the muscles at the base of the thumb
- Nerve testing (EMG and nerve conduction studies) showing moderate or severe compression

How Is Carpal Tunnel Release Performed?

- **Anesthesia:** Usually an outpatient procedure with numbing medicine and light sedation.
- **Incision:** A small incision is made in the palm.
- **Releasing the ligament:** The transverse carpal ligament is carefully divided while the median nerve is protected.
- **Closing:** The skin is closed with stitches and a soft dressing is applied.

The operation usually takes less than 30 minutes, and you go home the same day.

How Long Will It Take Me to Recover?

- **First days:** Keep the hand raised. Night numbness and tingling often improve quickly.
- **Two weeks:** Stitches are removed at your follow-up visit.
- **Four to six weeks:** Most people return to light work and daily activities. Palm tenderness gradually fades. Many people return to desk work within a week or two.
- **Three months and beyond:** Strength continues to return. When the nerve was badly compressed, numbness can take many months to improve.

Your post-operative guidelines explain how to care for your incision, manage swelling and pain, and when to call our office.

Are There Any Potential Risks or Complications?

All treatment and outcome results are specific to the individual patient. Possible risks include:

- Tenderness in the palm (pillar pain) for several weeks
- Infection or bleeding
- Injury to the nerve or its small branches, which is rare
- Symptoms that don't fully go away, especially when the nerve was badly compressed for a long time
- Risks related to anesthesia

Please discuss any questions about these risks with Dr. Grunch or one of her physician assistants.

Questions after surgery? Our Virtual Assistant answers common questions 24/7 at md-aid.com/c/southernneurosurgery, or call our office at (470) 293-9800. For chest pain or trouble breathing, call 911.

This sheet is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice. It does not replace individualized care from a licensed physician. Always follow the instructions Dr. Grunch and her team give you.

AFTER YOUR SURGERY

Postoperative Guidelines for a Carpal Tunnel Release

Incision care

- Your incision is closed with sutures (also called “stitches”) on the outside of your skin. These will be removed at your follow up appointment, 10-14 days after surgery.
- You may remove the dressing on the 3rd day after surgery. Please leave the stitches intact.
- You may get the incision wet showering 3 days after surgery. Do not scrub your wound, but gently cleanse it and pat dry.
- Please keep the area from rubbing (ex: typing on computer with wrist rubbing on desk)
- 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.

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.
- Most patients only need pain medication for a few days up to two weeks.
- 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 wrist and hand where you had surgery.
- You may use your hand 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 tissues and muscles. This may impair healing.
- Vaping and other nicotine products also slow 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 over 101°F.
- Constipation that is not relieved by stool medications.
- Redness, warmth, or significant drainage from your incision.
- Pain, swelling, or redness in your calves.
- Weakness or numbness in the hand that was not present before surgery.

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for chest pain, shortness of breath or trouble breathing.

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 our office.

Questions after surgery? Our Virtual Assistant answers common questions 24/7 at md-aid.com/c/southernneurosurgery, or call our office at (470) 293-9800. For chest pain or trouble breathing, call 911.



(470) 293-9800
Southernneurosurgery.com

This sheet is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice. It does not replace individualized care from a licensed physician. Always follow the instructions Dr. Grunch and her team give you.

PART 3

Questions After Surgery? We're Here 24/7.

Recovering from surgery often brings up questions between appointments: about your activity restrictions, your collar or brace, incision care, or what's normal and what's not. You don't have to wait for a call back. Our Virtual Assistant answers common post-operative questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, using information approved by our clinic.

Fastest way: scan the code

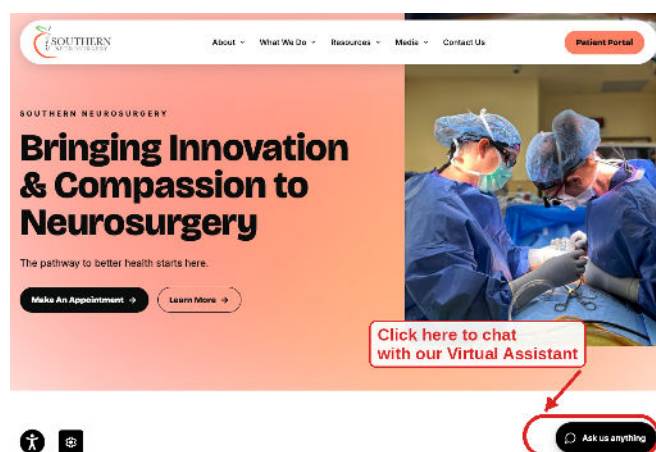
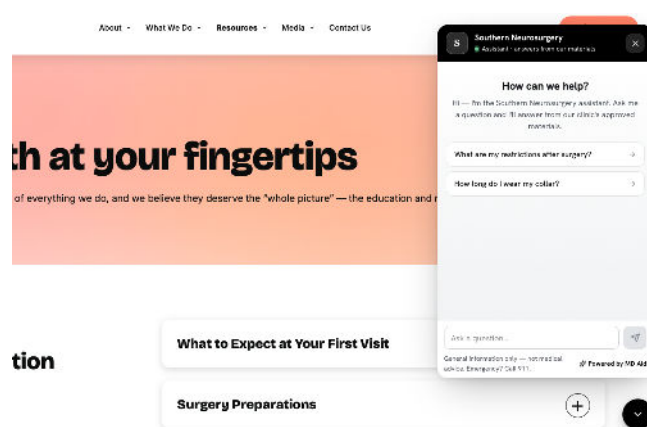
Point your phone's camera at the QR code to open the Virtual Assistant directly, or type this address into your web browser:

md-aid.com/c/southernneurosurgery



Or use our website

1. Go to southernneurosurgery.com and click the black "Ask us anything" bubble in the bottom right corner of the screen (left picture).
2. Type your question, or tap one of the suggested questions to get started (right picture).



Need to talk to a person?

If you don't find your answer or would rather speak with our team, call our office at (470) 293-9800.

Medical emergency? Call 911.

Do not use the Virtual Assistant or wait for a call back in an emergency.

The Virtual Assistant provides general information only. It is not a substitute for medical advice from your physician.