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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE

You have just had a release of your right or left carpal tunnel, performed under local anaesthesia. The procedure involves an incision that opens up the carpal tunnel and lessens the pressure on the median nerve. The skin is brought back together with stitches. In most cases, these are dissolvable stitches and do not need to be removed.

At the end of the procedure, a tight dressing will be placed on the wound by Dr. Hwang. This helps to decrease bleeding. If you feel like the dressing is too tight or you find that your fingers are no longer pink, you may loosen the dressing. The whole dressing should be left in place for approximately **three (3) days**. During this time, your hand and wrist should remain dry and avoid soaking it in water (baths, swimming, washing dishes). After these three (3) days, the outer wrapping can be removed. Steri-strips (white adhesive strips) are left underneath the overlying dressing. These strips should stay in place for **seven (7) days**. Afterwards, leave the incision open to the air. Wait a couple weeks before using skin cream or moisturizers. Do **not** put polysporin or hydrogen peroxide on the wound.

Your arm should remain elevated for approximately 24 hours after surgery. You should start moving your fingers as soon as possible after surgery. Your fingers should be moving more and more easily as each day goes by. Without moving your fingers, you may find that there is more swelling and pain in your hand.

The major risk of this surgery is infection. This does not occur often, but warning signs of infection include: increased pain, fever, chills, and sweats. The wound itself may start to look red and unhealthy. If this occurs, you should contact Dr. Hwang, your family physician, or the emergency department as soon as possible.

You may find that pain and aching persists for several weeks after the procedure. You may receive a prescription for pain control.

Please call Dr. Hwang's office to make a post-operative follow-up approximately **four (4) weeks** after the procedure.

Post-Operative "To Do" List:

- Elevate your arm for 24 hours after the procedure
- Remove the mesh dressing after three (3) days
- Remove steri-strips after seven (7) days
- Avoid soaking your wound for at least seven (7) days
- Contact Dr. Hwang's office for an appointment for four (4) weeks after the procedure
- Contact Dr. Hwang's office, your GP, or ER if there are signs of infection or other unexpected complications