



**Kuether Brain and Spine**  
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## **Discharge instructions for carpal tunnel surgery**

Please note: These are general guidelines and helpful suggestions for your post-operative recovery period. Everyone progresses at their own individual pace.

### Medications:

- a. Resume all previous medications unless instructed otherwise.
- b. Pain medications as prescribed. Take only as needed.
- c. Muscle relaxants as prescribed. Take only as needed.
- d. **NEVER DRIVE OR OPERATE MACHINERY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF NARCOTIC PAIN RELIEVERS OR MUSCLE RELAXANTS.**

### Activities:

- a. Keep hand elevated above level of heart for 48 hours after surgery.
- b. No lifting, pushing, pulling, overhead lifting with hand on the surgical side.
- c. No driving while on narcotic pain medications. (approximately 1 week)
- d. Please limit extremes in range of motion of your wrist.
- e. You may wear a wrist splint to help prevent excessive use of the wrist and to protect it while you sleep.
- f. Your energy level will be decreased for a short period of time following surgery.
- g. Walking is the best exercise after surgery.

### Diet:

- a. Your appetite may be decreased. It may help to eat smaller, more frequent meals.
- b. Your surgery and narcotic pain medications may cause constipation. If you need a laxative, try 1-2 tablespoons of Metamucil per day, and/or a tablespoon of milk of magnesia in the morning, drink lots of water. Remember to eat fiber, fresh vegetables, prunes, and fresh fruit.

## **Discharge instructions for carpal tunnel surgery (cont.)**

### Care of incision:

- a. Please keep dressing on for first 48 hours.
- b. Please keep the incision area clean and dry. Do not peel off scabs.
- c. You may shower after the surgery, but do not place the wound below water. Cover the hand with a plastic bag to keep it dry for 2 days.
- d. Do not submerge the incision in a bath tub, hot tub, or swimming pool for 2-3 weeks.
- e. Do not be surprised if redness develops around the sutures. If progressive redness or pus-like draining develops, please contact the office.
- f. Ice 15-20 minutes every 6-8 hours for 5-7 days.
- g. Unless directed, no ointments (such as Neosporin) on the incision.
- h. You may notice some numbness and swelling around your incision which is normal. This should gradually decrease.

### Additional instructions:

- a. If you have not already set up your post-operative appointment, please call the office when you get home to schedule your appointment. Your discharge paperwork should have instructions on it when you need to follow-up with your doctor's office.
- b. Medications are renewed only between the hours of 8:30 to 12:30 and 1:30pm-4:00pm, Monday thru Thursday, and 8:30am-12:30 on Friday. Please allow 2 business days for refill requests.
- c. No medications will be renewed during the weekends or after hours. No exceptions. Plan ahead.
- d. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office at 503-489-8111.



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## Management of Constipation

Constipation is a common problem associated with the use of narcotic pain medications, dehydration, and lack of activity. Management of this problem can be very straightforward if taken care of right away.

### BASIC CARE:

- a. Stay well hydrated (6-8 8 ounce glasses of water or other liquids a day)
- b. Eat a high fiber diet. Fruits and especially vegetables are very important. Grains such as bran fiber or whole wheat or oats can be helpful. Aim for 15-30 grams of dietary fiber per day.
- c. Walk often as tolerated.
- d. Reduce narcotic use as tolerated.

### RELIEF OF CONSTIPATION:

If constipation does occur, there are several ways to deal with it, such as prune juice, dried fruits, etc. If something more is needed, a dose or two of milk of magnesia may work.

For continued constipation: try Magnesium Citrate. This is found over the counter at most grocery stores and pharmacies. It comes in a bottle and often looks like generic soda. Drink half of a bottle at a time, and for no results in half an hour drink another half bottle. May repeat for 2 bottles in 24 hours.

If still constipated, see below:

Items Needed:

1 quart of Gatorade, Miralax 14 dose bottle, and two Dulcolax laxative 5mg tablets.

- a. Mix half of the Miralax in the quart of Gatorade.
- b. Take two 5mg Dulcolax laxative tablets.
- c. Wait ½ hour, then start drinking the Gatorade/Miralax mixture. Drink 1 glassful every 20 minutes until gone.
- d. You may repeat this regimen again, but it would be unlikely that you will remain constipated with two rounds of this cocktail. Remember, this may cause dehydration due to diarrhea, so drink fluids as needed.