ERIC TANNENBAUM, MD
Southern Indiana Orthopedics

4665 N US Highway 31, Columbus, IN 47201
902 N Lincoln St, Suite 1B, Greensburg, IN 47240
Appointments (812) 376-9353

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Carpal Tunnel Release

Post-Op Instructions

Wound Care

- **Icing:** use the ice machine 10–14 hours per day until your follow-up, or use ice packs 20 minutes per hour while awake. **Do not** put the ice pad directly against your skin (use a thin towel or clothing).
- **Dressings:** remove all dressings and gauze in 3 days. Throw away loose gauze. If small white sticky bandages (Steri-Strips) are in place, **do not remove them**. You may re-wrap with an ACE bandage to keep covered.
- **Bathing:** keep incisions clean and dry for 4 days after surgery. It is then OK to shower **unless your incisions are draining**. No tub baths, swimming pools, hot tubs, etc. for a minimum of 3 weeks after surgery. Do not scrub or pick off the white sticky bandages or paper tapes (Steri-Strips) underneath.
- **Sutures** will be removed at your first follow-up appointment in 10 days.

Activity

1. **Weightbearing:** as tolerated. Avoid heavy lifting (anything over 5 lbs) with the operated hand until you are seen for your follow-up appointment.
2. Avoid exercising or strenuous activities until you are seen in clinic for your follow-up appointment.
3. Start physical therapy after your first post-op clinic visit.
4. **No driving** if wearing a sling or if a splint/cast is in place, and at least until your first post-op appointment. When returning to driving, test braking and acceleration in an empty parking lot before driving in traffic. **Absolutely no driving while taking narcotics** (e.g. Tylenol #3/ codeine, Norco, Vicodin, Percocet, oxycodone).

Discharge Medications

1. **Stool softener** such as Colace (docusate sodium) or Senokot-S, 2 tablets once a day while taking narcotics. These do not require a prescription.
2. **Prescription pain medication:** 1 to 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain. Do not exceed 12 tablets per day. Taper off as your pain decreases.
3. You may switch to **acetaminophen (Tylenol)** once you no longer need prescription-strength pain medication (e.g. Norco). Take 1000 mg three times a day (do not exceed 3000 mg in 24 hours).

4. Check your discharge package and prescriptions to see if any other medications were prescribed for you.

Diet

If you have no nausea, start with clear liquids, then progress to solid foods once clear liquids are tolerated. No alcoholic beverages for at least 48 hours or while taking pain medication. Drink plenty of fluids and eat high-fiber foods to prevent constipation while taking prescription pain medication.

Follow-Up

You will follow up in **10 days** with Megan Vanderbur, PA-C, for your first post-op check. If you have questions, please call our office at **(812) 376-9353**.

When to Call — Emergency

Call or return for any of the following:

- Fever greater than 101°F, or a sustained fever greater than 100.5°F that has not resolved within 3–4 days after surgery
- Chills
- Increasing pain, swelling or redness
- Calf pain
- Drainage, especially if yellow, green or foul-smelling
- Excessive bleeding
- Chest pain or shortness of breath

SIO phone: (812) 376-9353

These instructions are general guidelines from Dr. Tannenbaum's office. Always follow any specific instructions given to you by Dr. Tannenbaum or his team. Questions? Call Southern Indiana Orthopedics at (812) 376-9353.