



## **BRIELLE ORTHOPEDICS**

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### Cubital Tunnel Release Post Operative Instructions

#### *Preparation for Surgery:*

Prior to your surgery, I will answer any questions you may have regarding your procedure and recovery. Most of this discussion will take place at your preoperative visit, when we fill out all necessary surgical paperwork.

Please remember that you should not eat or drink anything after midnight on the night before your surgery. This includes coffee or drinks on the morning of your operation. If you take certain necessary medications, please discuss this with me and/or your prescribing physician prior to your surgery to see if you need to take them on the morning of the operation, or wait until after the procedure. This includes blood thinner medications such as Coumadin or Warfarin. Certain surgeries can be done safely while on blood thinner medications while other surgeries require stopping these medications. If you are on a blood thinner, please contact the physician (typically your cardiologist) who prescribes the blood thinner and ask if it would be safe for you to stop taking the blood thinner prior to surgery.

The surgery center or hospital where your surgery will take place will call you the day before your operation to let you know what time you should arrive.

On the day of the operation, please shower or bathe and take care to wash the operative area well with soap and water. This will aid in decreasing the amount of bacteria on your skin, and will help to prevent postoperative infection. Also, keep in mind that most procedures will require anesthesia, which means that you will not be able to drive yourself home from the operation.

After you arrive at the surgery location, I will meet you in the preoperative area to confirm the planned operation and to fill out the remaining paperwork. I will be happy to answer any further questions at this time, and discuss the operation with any family members who may also have questions.

Please remember that I would rather you call with any questions prior to, or after, your operation than let your questions go unanswered!

Bandage, Washing and Bathing:

You will notice that you have an ACE wrap covering your elbow. If you had a nerve “transposition” you may have a hard splint which will not allow your elbow to move. The ACE Wrap should be snug but not too tight. If you have a hard splint, this should be left in place until your postoperative visit, and you should skip down to the next section on “Ice, Elevation and Motion.”

If you do not have a splint, you may remove the ACE wrap and underlying dressing 4 days after your surgery. You may notice some blood staining the dressing - this is normal. At that time, you may shower directly over the wound and stitches. After your shower, pat the incision area dry gently, and cover with a bandaid or other dressing of your choice to keep the stitches covered so they don’t get pulled out. Avoid going in a swimming pool, lake or ocean until two weeks after your surgery.

Ice, Elevation & Motion:

One of the goals that you can help to achieve after surgery is to minimize swelling at the surgery site. Elevating the surgical area will minimize swelling, and this should be a focus of recovery during the first 48 hours. Application of ice to the surgical site for 20 minutes at a time will also reduce swelling and pain. You should move the fingers and use the hand and arm for light weight normal daily activities as much as possible. This will help to avoid stiffness. Avoid heavy direct pressure on the surgical wound site until the stitches are removed.

Physical Therapy:

Most patients do not require therapy after cubital tunnel release surgery. Normal daily activities provide enough therapy to recover normal motion. During your postoperative visit in the office, we will assess whether physical therapy will be necessary.

Postoperative Appointment:

In general, I prefer for you to schedule your first postoperative visit at the same time you schedule your surgery. Typically, this visit should be 10-14 days after your surgery date unless otherwise instructed. Please use the blank line below to write down your follow up appointment date and time, so that you have an easy reference:

**POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENT:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE** **TIME**

Medications:

Current research is showing that a combination of over-the-counter medications can control pain better than narcotic pain medications. A typical regimen of over-the-counter medications includes Tylenol and/or Advil. I recommend you try taking 1000mg of Tylenol (Acetaminophen) every 8 hours, and 600mg of Advil (Ibuprofen) every 6 hours, staggering the timing of your doses, to see if you can avoid requiring narcotic pain medication. Patients with a history of bleeding stomach ulcers, severe kidney disease, or on blood thinning medication should NOT take Advil/Ibuprofen/Aleve. Patients with liver disease should NOT take Tylenol/Acetaminophen.

At your preoperative visit, I will give you a prescription for a narcotic medication to control your postoperative pain. This should be taken if the over-the-counter regimen described above is not working. The type of medication and number of pills prescribed will depend on the nature of your operation. Please keep in mind that narcotic pain medications can NOT legally be refilled over the phone, so any requests for narcotic refills should be made during business hours - otherwise I will have no way of getting a new prescription to you.

Some patients may experience nausea with narcotic pain medications. The best prevention for this is to take the medicine with food.

The local anesthetic injection used during your surgery acts like the novocaine injection given by your dentist and will numb the area of surgery for a few hours after the operation. It will also make your fingers feel numb - this is a normal effect of the injection so do not worry if your fingers are numb immediately after the operation.

Postoperative Complications:

If any of the following should occur, please do not hesitate to call our office at 732-840-7500.

- Increasing pain despite pain medications
- Drainage from the wound more than 2 days after your surgery
- Increasing redness, pain or swelling at the surgery site
- Fever greater than 101° which does not go down with Tylenol
- Nausea/vomiting with pain medication

Try to call during business hours in the case of a routine question or concern (8:00am - 4:00pm). For any urgent problems, the above office phone number is in service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you call after hours, the call will be routed to our answering service who will put you in touch with our "on-call" Physician Assistant. The Physician Assistant will be able to assist you, but if the Physician Assistant has any more serious concerns, the Physician on call will be contacted. Also remember that if any emergency occurs, you have the option of going to a local emergency room and/or calling 911 for immediate assistance.

***All My Best For A Healthy Recovery,***

***Michael Nakashian, MD***