

FAQ - Carpal Tunnel Release

Q: How long will my sutures be in after surgery?

A: You will have your sutures in for 2 weeks after surgery. They will be removed when you come in for your first post op visit.

Q: How long will my incision be?

A: The standard surgery has a 2 inch incision.

Q: Can I get my hand wet while the sutures are still in?

A: It is important not to get your hand wet while the sutures are still in, to avoid infection. Wound care and the healing process is very important especially with an incision on this part of the wrist where there is a great deal of motion. These are some of the most difficult wounds to heal, especially if you have an illness such as diabetes or if you are a smoker.

Q: When can I return to work?

A: Gradually return to work as tolerated with the surgical extremity. Allow pain to be your guide. If you perform manual labor or repetitive motion activities we may recommend light duties or a brace to protect the wound.

Q: Will I need physical therapy and how long will I need it for?

A: The need for therapy is an individual issue. If both hands are going to have surgery, then we often recommend therapy in between to speed up the recovery. If only one side is planned, then it will depend on the severity of the situation or the amount of pre operative weakness.

Q: When can I begin to drive?

A: At approximately 1 week from surgery on average. The criteria for driving is as follows:

1. Once you are no longer taking the narcotic pain medications during the day.
2. Ability to safely control steering with minimal use of involved extremity and no discomfort doing so.
3. Automatic transmission only during the first 2-3 days.

Q: How often and how long should I use ice packs?

A: You should utilize ice packs for any discomfort to reduce pain and swelling as often as you can cycling it on and off for 20 minutes at a time. This can be performed as many times each day as time allows. Heat can be applied 72 hrs post op as well for pain relief.

Q: When can I return to my normal activities?

A: It may be several weeks before you can return to your normal level of physical activities; for some, it can be several months. You may be in physical therapy to re-build circulation, muscle strength and joint flexibility if needed.