PERIOPERATIVE SERVICES

Post-Operative Instructions for **Carpal/Cubital Tunnel Release**

PAIN:

Keep your hand elevated, higher than your heart, as required for 2 to 3 days. Use a pillow if necessary. Take the suggested pain medication as directed.

OPERATIVE SITE:

**What to expect**

* Mild swelling or bruising.
* Improvements in your symptoms and grip strength is slow and could take as long as two years, depending on your age, the severity of your problem and other health conditions.
* Depending on your age, severity of initial problem and associated condition, this may take as long as two years.
* Some symptoms may not return to normal.

**The dressing**

Keep your initial dressing intact for 3 days. Check your circulation, press on your fingernails. They should turn white then return to pink when the pressure is released. If your fingernail(s) is (are) blue or white, unwrap and re-wrap the bandage so they are more comfortable. If this does not improve circulation, contact your surgeon.

After 3 days:

* Remove all outer wraps and gauze. Do not replace them.
* Wash the incision with soap and water. You may shower and pat incision dry.
* Use the hand for light activities (washing hair, preparing meals etc).
* Open and close your fingers and move your wrist as often as possible.
* The sutures will dissolve on their own.

**ACTIVITIES:**

In the First 6 weeks after surgery

**Do:**

* Reintroduce activities as your pain and swelling allow.
* You may return to work – many office workers and those who are self-employed return to work after 2 weeks.
* Depending upon the physical demands of your job it may be more than 6 weeks before you can return to work.
* After 6 weeks you may return to all your previous activities including strenuous work and weight lifting.

**Do NOT:**

* Lift anything 15 pounds (7kg) or more.
* Drive until you are pain free and no longer taking narcotic pain medications and have a licensed driver with you for your first few trips.

**DIET:**

You may resume a regular diet. It is advisable to eat a high fiber diet and drink plenty of fluids to help prevent constipation**.** Good sources of fiber are fruits, vegetables and whole grain breads and cereals (All Bran™, Bran Flakes, Shreddies™ and Shredded Wheat). You may also purchase an over the counter stool softener like Colace™ or a mild laxative if needed.

**FOLLOW UP**:

Your doctor will advise you when to follow up in the office.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Contact your surgeon or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have:

* Elevated temperature (38o or 100.4o) and/or chills lasting more than 24 hours.
* Redness that spreads beyond the incision.
* Pain that changes and/or worsens after 3-4 days.
* Swelling that worsens after 3-4 days.
* Flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, muscle aches and pains).
* Pus-like drainage from the incision, grey, yellow or green.

The information contained on this sheet is provided to you and your family to help you in your recovery from this procedure. This document is not intended to replace medical advice from your doctor or healthcare team. If you require more specific/additional medical advice, contact your doctor and healthcare team about your particular healthcare needs.

Protect yourself! Clean your hands frequently using soap and water or

hand sanitizer, and ask that your healthcare providers and visitors do the same." Clean hands save lives.