

Dr. Biswas' Instructions following Ulnar Nerve Surgery

Dressing and Wound Care

- After surgery, you will be in a bulky dressing (bandage) with a plaster splint with the fingers free.
- The splint is similar to a cast. The splint cannot be removed and must be kept dry.
- When showering or bathing, cover the splint and your hand with a plastic bag to keep everything dry. The splint protects the incision and the surgical repair, as well as lessen swelling.
- Elevate your hand above your heart as much as possible to lessen swelling and pain. Pillows and blankets under the arm are helpful when you go to sleep.

Pain Management

- Surgery to can be painful. You will receive a prescription for narcotic pain medicine. For the first 2-3 days, take the pain medication around the clock to stay on top of the pain control.
- After 3 days, take the medicine only if you need it. If your pain is mild, you make take Tylenol (acetaminophen) instead.
- It is important to know that even with pain medication, you can still experience some pain.
- Be sure to talk with us about how to take your pain medication. Taking the correct dose at the right time is very important.
- Numbness and Tingling is normal and common after surgery.
- If you have uncomfortable side effects from the pain medicine, please call our office at the number listed above.

Driving

- Do not drive if you are taking narcotic pain medication. It is not safe. The medicine can make you drowsy and delay your reaction
- Once you are no longer taking the medicine, you may drive as soon as you can comfortably grip the steering wheel with both hands. It is generally best to avoid long drives until the initial dressing and plaster splint is removed.

Activity

- Move your fingers to help prevent stiffness. Try to bend (make a fist) and straighten your fingers 5 to 6 times a day.
- You can use your hand for very light activities of daily living, such as eating, writing, typing, getting dressed, and brushing your teeth. However, pain and stiffness may make it hard to do these things for 2 - 4 weeks.

Follow-Up Plan

- When you leave the surgery center, you should have a follow – up already 10-14 days after surgery. You may see a therapist prior to your first post-surgery visit with Dr. Biswas. Your dressing and sutures will be removed. At this visit, you will be placed into a removable brace for the next 4 weeks.
- You will be referred to a hand therapist in our clinic to start range of motion exercises for your elbow, wrist, and fingers as well as exercises to decrease swelling and scarring. You will see a therapist once per week for 4 weeks. You may be referred to a therapist closer to your home for future visits if that is more convenient for you.
- Do not do any weight-lifting or strengthening exercises without talking with your surgeon or occupational therapist.

Results

- Most patients who have ulnar nerve decompression surgery regain full use of their hand, wrist, and elbow.
- It may take 4 or 5 months to regain full strength. Some people will continue to notice a difference up to a year after surgery.
- It is important to remember that if you had long-standing nerve compression, some of the numbness may persist and not completely go away.