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NHS Grampian

Going home after carpal tunnel decompression

Information for patients and carers

Day Case Unit
Dr Gray's Hospital

For 24 hours after general anaesthetic/sedation you are strongly advised:

- **Not to drink alcohol**
- **Not to use any drugs unless advised by your doctor or the hospital**
- **Not to drive or cycle**
- **Not to operate machinery, including kitchen equipment**
- **Not to sign any legal documents or make important decisions**
- **Not to smoke**

A responsible adult must stay with you for 24 hours after your general anaesthetic/sedation.

Your wound

Wound and dressing

You have a large dressing and bandage on your hand. This is to protect the wound on the front of your wrist. Change the dressing as instructed by your surgeon or ward nurse. Keep the dressing dry.

Stitches

If you have stitches, they will be removed in 7 to 10 days either at the Outpatient Clinic or at your own GP surgery. We'll discuss this with you before you go home.

Pain control

You may have mild to moderate discomfort for a few days. We will offer you pain-relieving tablets, and may give you a supply before you leave hospital to take at home. Take these regularly (as advised on the packet) for the first few days after your procedure.

After your operation

Swelling

You may have some swelling of your hand for the first 48 hours. Try to keep your hand raised above waist height when you are not using the hand.

Exercise

It is important to keep your fingers and hand exercised. Practise touching the tip of your thumb with the tip of your fingers in turn, several times at regular intervals. Exercise helps to prevent swelling and stiffness.

When can I return to my usual routine and activities?

You may return to work and any other activities when the pain in your hand allows and the dressing has been removed. Try to keep the wound covered, clean and dry until it has healed.

We recommend that:

- you wear rubber gloves when working in water
- women use a shoulder bag rather than a handbag
- you carry small objects in your arms rather than in your hands
- you avoid lifting heavy objects
- you seek help with heavy housework.

Driving

You may drive as soon as the pain in your hand allows and the dressing has been removed. Do not drive within 24 hours of a general anaesthetic or if your hand is stiff or sore.

If you drive a vehicle while you are sore, your reactions will be slower than normal. You may also find that your insurance is invalid if you drive while unfit. Please check with your insurance company if you are unsure.

Things to look out for

Complications are rare after surgical procedures, but please be aware of the potential problems which may arise.

Please contact your GP or the department who treated you for advice if you have:

- **Severe pain which is not controlled by pain killers**
- **Excessive bleeding from the wound which does not stop after applying pressure for 5 to 10 minutes.**
- **Bandage becomes wet, tight or falls off.**
- **Your hand becomes numb or your fingers become discoloured.**
- **If your wound is red and swollen or has excessive discharge.**
- **A temperature, feel feverish or generally unwell.**

Please remember to rest as you recover from your procedure.

Contact telephone numbers

After you go home, if you need any further advice about your procedure please contact your GP or:

Day Case Unit
Dr Gray's Hospital
☎ (01343) 567428
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

If calling outwith the above hours, call

Ward 6
Dr Gray's Hospital
☎ (01343) 567553

or

NHS 24
☎ 111

This leaflet is also available in large print.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. For a copy please call Quality Development on 01224 554149. Ask for leaflet 0770.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.

Day Case Unit
Dr Gray's Hospital
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