

Cubital Tunnel Release with Anterior Submuscular Transposition – Postoperative Instructions

What to Expect After Surgery

You have undergone a **cubital tunnel release (decompression of the ulnar nerve at the elbow) with anterior submuscular transposition**. This procedure is designed to relieve pressure on the ulnar nerve and move it to a better position for long term health.

Most patients experience:

- Mild to moderate soreness in the medial (inside) elbow and muscle soreness in the forearm.
- Gradual improvement in numbness and tingling (this may take days, weeks, or months depending on severity of nerve compression and every patient is different)

Bandage & Wound Care

- Your surgical bandage can be **removed the day after surgery (Post-Op Day #1)**
- Underneath, you will see:
 - The medial elbow incision which is closed with **absorbable sutures (Monocryl)** below the skin that you will not see.
 - **Steri-strips** (small adhesive strips) at the surface

After removing the bandage:

- Leave steri-strips in place — they will fall off on their own
- You may cover the incision with a simple bandage if desired, but also okay to leave the incision open to air
- Keep the area clean and dry when not showering; avoid dirty water scenarios such as pools, ocean, ponds, etc.

Showering

- You may **shower normally starting Post-Op Day #1**
- Let water run over the incision
- Do not scrub the incision directly
- Pat dry afterward

Activity & Use of Your Arm and Hand

- **No formal restrictions**
- You are encouraged to:
 - Use your arm and hand as tolerated
 - Perform daily activities immediately
- It is **safe to push through some discomfort**
 - Mild pain with activity is expected
 - This will not damage your surgery and will not damage the nerve recovery outcome

Helpful guideline:

If it hurts but feels manageable → OK to continue

If pain is severe or worsening → ease back

Pain & Recovery Timeline

- First few days: soreness and tightness are normal
- 1–2 weeks: gradual improvement in comfort and function
- Several weeks to sometimes months:
 - Continued improvement in strength
 - Numbness/tingling may take longer to resolve especially in severe nerve compression cases

Medications

- Use prescribed or over-the-counter pain medication as needed
- Many patients do well with:
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
 - Ibuprofen (if medically appropriate)

When to Be Concerned

Please contact our office if you notice:

- Increasing redness or warmth around the incision
- Drainage (pus) from the wound
- Fever > 101°F
- Severe or worsening pain not improving
- Persistent swelling that does not improve