☐ Dressing and Wound Care

- After surgery, you will be in a **bulky dressing with a splint** that supports your wrist. The splint helps protect the incision site and lessens swelling.
- When showering or bathing, cover the splint and your hand with a plastic bag to keep everything dry.
- 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.
- **4-5 days after surgery, you will see a Hand Therapist to have the splint removed and work on range of motion and scar massage.**
- After the splint comes off, you may shower without covering the incision, but do not soak your hand in the bathtub, swimming pool, or sink.

*If your incision is red, foul-smelling, or there is drainage coming from it during daytime hours, call us right away at (206) 598-4263 (HAND). After office hours, you can call the hospital operator at (206) 598-6190 and ask for the Hand Fellow on-call. Go to the emergency room or urgent care if this happens at night or on the weekend.*

☐ Pain Management

- You will receive a prescription for narcotic pain medicine. Take the medicine only if you need it. If your pain is mild, you make take Tylenol (acetaminophen) instead.
- Be sure to talk with the clinic nurse about how to take your pain medication. Taking the correct dose at the right time is very important.
- If you have uncomfortable side effects from the pain medicine, please call the nurse at (206) 598-4263 (HAND).
Driving

- Do not drive if you are taking narcotic pain medication. It is not safe. The medicine can make you sleepy 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.

Activity

- You can use your hand for activities of daily living, such as eating, writing, typing, getting dressed, brushing teeth, combing your hair, preparing food, and other light activities.
- Do not lift anything heavier than a cup of coffee or full soda can (about 1-2 lbs) until sutures have been removed.
- Avoid heavy repetitive activities for the first 4 weeks such as hammering or weight lifting as these may increasing scarring and may lead to prolonged recovery.
- You may do light aerobic exercises 2-3 days after surgery.

Follow-Up Plan

- When you leave the surgery center, you should have a follow-up already set up with an occupational hand therapist 4-5 days after surgery.
- You will see the occupational therapist and your surgeon at your 2-week visit after surgery. Your sutures will be removed at this visit.
- The Hand Therapist will assess your progress. The Therapist will also teach you exercises to lessen the scarring around the incision and increase your hand's strength and range of motion.
- Once your sutures are removed, you can increase activities as tolerated but avoid heavy repetitive activities for 4 weeks after surgery.

Results

- Most patients who have carpal tunnel release regain full use of their hand, with full motion and return of strength within about 4 weeks after their surgery. Some pain or numbness may persist even with surgery.

For more information, please visit our website at WWW.UWHAND.COM