

# ULNAR NERVE RELEASE



## MCRAE PLASTIC SURGERY

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## Dressing and Wound Care

- After surgery, you will be in a bulky dressing (bandage) that covers your elbow, forearm, and wrist. The bandage must be kept dry.
- When showering or bathing, cover the bandage and your hand with a plastic bag to keep everything dry. The bandage protects the incision and helps to reduce 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.
- You may start moving your elbow, wrist, and fingers for light activities right after surgery.
- The bandage may be removed after 7 days. The steri strips will fall off in the shower after several days of showering. You should use polysporin over the incision line for 7 days after the steri strips fall off.

## Pain Management

- You will receive a prescription for narcotic pain medicine and an antiinflammatory. Take the narcotic medicine only if you need it. If your pain is mild, you may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) instead.

## Driving

- Do not drive if you are taking narcotic pain medication. It is not safe.
- 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

- It is very common to have swelling and bruising around the elbow for up to two weeks after surgery that may limit your movement and use of the arm.
- Move your fingers often to help prevent stiffness. Try to bend and straighten your elbow, wrist, and fingers completely 5 or 6 times every day, right after surgery.

- Because you won't be using your arm for your everyday activities, also exercise your shoulder several times a day by raising your arm overhead. This will help prevent stiffness in your shoulder.

- Do not over 10 pounds for 1 month after surgery.

### **Follow-Up Plan**

- 2-3 weeks after surgery in clinic with Dr. Matthew McRae. Martin Center Follow up in Toronto is booked by calling 416-864-5280.

- The sutures are absorbing and take 3 weeks to do so.

### **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.

