

Department of Neurosurgery

# Carpal Tunnel Surgery

What happens when you are in hospital





# Carpal Tunnel Surgery

This leaflet explains what to expect when you are in hospital and during the recovery period.

The name of your operation is .....

You should expect to be in hospital for ..... nights.

Admission date is .....

Discharge date is .....

You will need to stop the following medication:

.....

.....

.....

..... days before the surgery.

## The day of admission

On the day of admission at 12.00 hrs you need to telephone the ward on 01865 231526 to check that a bed is available for you. You will be given a time to come in to the ward. Your operation will usually be planned for the next day.

Some people may be asked to come in on the day of their operation. In this case we will tell you when you need to stop eating and drinking and what time to arrive on the day of your operation.

We will always do our best to make sure you have your operation as planned. However, we do have emergency admissions and sometimes a planned operation may have to be postponed.

## Arriving at hospital

Please come to the Neurosciences Ward on level 2 in the West Wing of the John Radcliffe Hospital. Parking is available under and around the West Wing building.

In accordance with our Privacy and Dignity policy we will always try give you a bed in a bay with other people of the same sex and to make sure you have access to the appropriate shower and toilet facilities. During your hospital stay we may need to move you to another bed or ward. In rare circumstances we may have to put men and women in the same bay. In this case we will make every effort to move you to a single sex bay as soon as possible.

With your permission we will list your name and bed number on a poster board so that all our staff know where you are on the ward.

Visiting hours on the ward are from 3pm to 8.30pm. This allows patients to have time to rest. We request that only **2 people** visit at any one time. Flowers are no longer allowed on the wards for the purposes of health and safety and infection control.

The nurse will explain the menu system and how to order food.

You may require some extra tests and your blood pressure, pulse and temperature will be checked. You will be told approximately what time your operation will be and when to stop eating and drinking.

## The day of your operation

The nurse will tell you when to get ready for theatre. You will be asked to wear a theatre gown and special stockings to reduce the risk of a blood clot (deep vein thrombosis) developing in your leg.

The Surgeon will see you before your operation to explain the operation and any risks involved and to answer any questions you may have.

The Anaesthetist will also see you to talk to you about the anaesthetic. You will then be asked to sign the consent form for the operation to go ahead. When it's time the nurse will take you down to the anaesthetic room, where you will be prepared for your operation.

## After the operation

You will wake up in the recovery room. You may have a drip in the back of your hand and an oxygen mask over your mouth and nose.

You will have a dressing on the palm of your hand near the base of your thumb, and possibly a thicker, padded dressing over the top of this. The padded dressing should remain in place for 2-3 days. This helps reduce swelling. The lighter dressing underneath should stay in place until the stitches are removed. For the first 2-3 days while you are resting, it may be helpful to prop your hand up on pillows. This also helps reduce swelling.

You will be taken back to the ward and we will monitor your pulse, blood pressure and wound regularly. We will offer you regular pain relief. It is important that you tell a nurse if you are feeling sick or if you have pain so we can help make you comfortable. You may eat and drink when you feel ready.

## Going home

You may be able to go home later the same day. If this is not possible, we ask you to be ready to leave hospital by 10am on the day you are due to go home. If it is not possible for you to be collected at 10am we will ask you to wait in the discharge lounge until you are collected. Please tell one of the nurses on the day of your admission if you think you will not be collected by 10am.

By the time you leave hospital we would expect you to be able to care for yourself, walk up and down stairs and sit in a car for the journey home. It may be sensible to make arrangements for help with shopping, housework, gardening and caring for small children.

## Getting back to normal

The length of time that you need to take off work depends on the nature of your job. As a guide you are likely to need about 2 weeks off work. We can give you a sick certificate to cover the time you need to take off work.

The strength in your hand/arm may feel weaker at first but this should gradually return to normal over the first few months. It is important to prevent your shoulder from becoming stiff, so a few exercises are advised each day until you have full use of your hand. We suggest raising your arm as if you were going to brush your hair. You should aim to do this 5 times a day. You may drive when you feel safe and comfortable enough to do so.

## Wound care

In most cases the stitches can be removed after 10 days by a nurse at your GP's surgery. They will remove the dressing at the same time. Your nurse on the ward will give you a letter for the Practice Nurse – you will need to make an appointment with them when you are discharged from hospital. The wound on your hand should be clean and dry. If your wound becomes red or swollen you should see your GP as soon as possible.

It is usual for your scar to feel sensitive for 6-8 weeks. Once the wound is healed and your stitches have been removed, massaging the scar with a moisturising cream may help.

## Questions or concerns

If you have any questions that you would like to discuss either before you come into hospital or after you have left, you can contact one of the Nurse Practitioners on:

### **Direct line 01865 234975**

Or you can contact the hospital switchboard on 01865 741166 and ask to bleep one of us on the following numbers:

Ruth Trout                      Bleep 6355

Gillian Hemmings              Bleep 6225

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473**. When we receive your call we may transfer you to an interpreter. This can take some time, so please be patient.

Neurosurgery Nurse Practitioners  
Version 2, September 2009  
Review, September 2012  
Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust  
Oxford OX3 9DU  
[www.oxfordradcliffe.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordradcliffe.nhs.uk)

OMI 982.1