

## POST OPERATIVE INFORMATION FOR ULNAR NERVE DECOMPRESSION AT THE ELBOW

### WHAT HAPPENS NOW ?

You may have two crepe bandages over the wound. On going home the top crepe with the cotton wool underneath can be removed. The next day the other crepe bandage may be removed to reveal a small dressing over the wound.

You will need a follow up appointment either with the surgeon, at the ward or with your local doctor the next day to check the wound.

You will have a further appointment in 1 to 2 weeks to check that the wound is healing well.

The sutures are usually dissolvable and the wound should stay covered and dry for at least 14 days. If the wound gets wet it is important to take off the wet dressing (even if you do not have another at the time) and allow the wound to dry. Replace the dressing with a clean one after, cleaning the wound with normal soap and, making sure it is completely dry.

The arm should be used as comfortable. This will help remove some of the discomfort you will have from swelling as it allows it to drain away. Try not to lean on the elbow as this encourages infection (and pain).

As long as the dressing remains dry and does not get soiled it can be changed every 2nd day

Any non dissolvable sutures are usually removed between 10 - 14 days postoperatively.

Most patients do not need any physiotherapy unless there is some persisting problems.

It is important to use the arm after the first few days as this helps reduce long term stiffness developing. Do not lift anything heavy until instructed by your doctor and this is usually not until about 3 months after the surgery. You should avoid using the arm to twist (like using a screwdriver).

With time all the stiffness will disappear and this is usually over 6 weeks to 3 months.

The scar will remain pink for some time and will gradually fade to a fine white line. The skin around the scar may peel off like sunburn and this is not to be worried about.

Return to work will be discussed with you preoperatively and will depend on the occupation that you have.

We generally recommend against driving for the first 4 - 6 weeks following surgery.

### What do you need to watch for ?

If you develop any of the above symptoms it is important that you contact your surgeon or local doctor immediately

**1. Increasing Pain in the wound/elbow.** It is common to have some pain and as you use the arm more some stiffness may develop, but if the pain is steadily increasing this may suggest a problem and it is important to seek advice

**2. Fever** This will suggest the possibility of infection and we must be notified immediately

**3. Swelling or infection in the wound.** The wound will swell a little after the first day or so and the wound edges may appear raised. If the area around the wound starts to redden then this may suggest infection. It is normally a little pink but increasing redness means the possibility of infection.

**4. Increasing or new onset weakness or numbness in the hand or fingers.**

Your symptoms may not improve immediately depending on the length and severity of the compression that the nerve has been under. They should not be getting worse. If this is the case it is important that you contact us.

