Ulnar Nerve Transposition

An ulnar nerve transposition is a surgery done for people with pressure on the ulnar nerve. The ulnar nerve is one of the main nerves leading to the hand. If there is pressure on this nerve at the elbow it can cause a range of problems. These include pain, swelling, weakness, or clumsiness of the hand, as well as tingling or numbness of the ring and small fingers. The pressure on the nerve is called ulnar neuropathy or it is sometimes referred to cubital tunnel syndrome.

The ulnar nerve is a connection between the spinal cord and the muscles of the forearm and hand. The ulnar nerve passes across the back of the elbow behind the bump on the inner side of the upper arm bone.

Your surgeon has recommended an ulnar nerve transposition. The goal of this surgery is to move the nerve in front of the bump so that it does not catch and stretch when the elbow is bent. The nerve can be moved so that it is just under the skin or beneath the muscle in the area. It is most effective when it is placed under the muscle so that it is more protected.

What to Expect After Surgery

Your surgery is most often done as an outpatient. You will go home the same day as surgery. You will need someone to drive you home. You will be given an arm sling to help protect your incision and protect your elbow from being bumped. You may want to use some extra padding in your arm sling.

Wound Care

Your incision may be closed with sutures, staples, Steri-Strips®, or Dermabond® skin adhesive.

- Dermabond® Skin Adhesive is often used. It works like glue.
  - Do not scratch, rub, or pick at the glue.
  - Keep a dry bandage over it.
  - Do not place tape on the glue.
  - Do not soak or scrub your incision. Cover it with plastic wrap before a shower. **The Dermabond® must not get wet for the first 5 days.**
  - After bathing, gently pat dry.
  - The adhesive will fall off on its own in 10-14 days.
  - Do not put lotions or creams on the Dermabond®.

- Steri-Strips® are thin pieces of tape over the incisions. They slowly fall off in about 10 days.

- If you have sutures or staples, they will have to be removed in 10-14 days.

- Do not take tub baths.
Check your incision daily. Call your doctor if you notice any of these signs of infection.

This includes:

- Increased redness, swelling, or drainage
- Large increase in pain
- Fever greater than 100°F for two readings taken 4 hours apart

Pain

Your pain should improve over time. As this happens, you will need less pain pills and can take plain or extra-strength acetaminophen (Tylenol®). All pain medicines should be taken with food and at least 8 ounces of water. If you notice an increase in pain, numbness, or weakness, call your doctor.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the neurosurgery clinic at (608) 263-7502. After hours, nights, weekends, and holidays, this phone number will reach the paging operator. Ask for the Neurosurgery Resident on-call. Give the paging operator your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you live out of the area, please call 1-800-323-8942