



RUSH MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
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Surgical Patient Education

Cubital Tunnel Release Surgery

What is Cubital Tunnel Release Surgery?

Open Cubital Tunnel Release is a surgery to relieve symptoms caused by pressure and swelling of the ulnar nerve. The ulnar nerve gets swollen and the swelling pinches the nerves and causes pain and numbness.

The surgeon will make an incision and relieve the pressure from the ulnar nerve to help decrease swelling and irritation.



What are the Risks?

- **Infection** - There is always a risk of infection when surgical cuts are made to the skin but this is minimal with a cubital tunnel release.
- **Bleeding** - There is a risk of bleeding but it is also minimal with cubital tunnel surgery.
- **Injury to the ulnar nerve** - The area that is released is around the ulnar nerve so there is a risk of injuring the nerve but this is also minimal.

What happens during the procedure?

- You will be taken to the operating room or pre-procedure area. Depending on what the surgeon decides, you may receive a block to numb your arm and medication to make you sleepy.
- You will be placed on monitors and watched closely.
- After you are sleepy and your arm is numb, the surgeon will make an incision on your elbow and perform the release/debridement.
- The skin will then be sutured closed.
- A bandage/dressing will then be placed and wrapped around your elbow. You will be taken back to the pre-operative room once you are awake.

Before Surgery

- You may be asked to stop certain medications such as aspirin or ibuprofen, be sure to check with your surgeon's office and anesthesia to see what medications to stop.
- You will not be able to eat or drink before surgery, it is important that you follow these instructions.
- You must have someone drive you home following surgery and someone needs to stay with you for 24 hours.
- You will be asked to shower the night before or morning of surgery.

After Surgery

- There will be a bulky dressing on your elbow.
- Your arm will be numb, often for a day or more if you have a block done to your arm.
- If you shower, use a waterproof dressing or bandage to cover your dressing to your elbow, do not get it wet.
- You may be given a prescription for medication for pain, sometimes this can also be over the counter. It is important to take the medicine as prescribed and alternate the medicine to get maximum pain control.

Recovery After an Cubital Tunnel Release Surgery

How long will I be out of work?

- You should prepare to be off work for a possibility of up to 4-6 weeks if your job requires heavy work/lifting.
- Recovery may be shorter or longer than the 4-6 weeks. Sometimes you may go back to work more quickly depending on your job and activities performed at your job.