Instructions For Patients Going Home

Do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.

A nerve biopsy is an operation where a small piece of nerve is removed for testing. Biopsies help us to identify nerve conditions and to confirm certain medical problems or disorders.

There are different kinds of nerve biopsies:

**Sural Nerve Biopsy:** The sural nerve (in the ankle) is the place most often used to remove a small piece of nerve for testing.

**Peroneal Nerve Biopsy:** A small piece of the peroneal nerve (from the foot) is removed for testing.

**Muscle Biopsy:** A small piece of muscle is removed for testing. The most common places are the upper arm or thigh. The biopsy is usually done to find diseases that affect how the muscle works.

What you can eat and drink after the operation

You can go back to eating and drinking what you normally would right away.

What activities you can do after the operation

- Use your arm or leg as you normally would, except for a few restrictions.
- Do NOT do strenuous sports for 2 to 3 days.
- Do NOT lift anything heavier then 5 kg or 10 lbs with the hand that has been operated on.
- Do NOT stand or walk for long periods of time (within the first 24 hours).
- When you lie down or sit up, keep your operated arm or leg up on 1 or 2 pillows for the first 24 hours. This will help decrease swelling.
How to take care of your wound from the operation

- Keep the bandage clean and dry at all times.
- Leave the bandage on until you return for your follow-up appointment.
- If your surgeon has told you to remove the bandage, do so as instructed.
- If you have Steri-strips® under the bandage (small white tapes), leave them in place. When they start to peel off, remove them and throw them away.
- Keep your arm or foot covered until the wound heals or the stitches have been removed (usually 7 to 10 days after the surgery).
- If you have stitches, they will be removed at your next follow-up appointment.

How to take showers

- You can take a shower 24 hours after your operation. Leave the bandage in place and make sure it does not get wet. When you shower wrap your arm or leg in plastic.
- Do not take baths.

How to cope with pain

- Some pain or discomfort is normal after this operation. Your pain should get less and less every day.
- We may give you a prescription for pain medication. If we do, have the prescription filled at a pharmacy. Follow the directions on the bottle for taking the medication.
- If we haven't given you a prescription and you have pain, take Extra Strength Tylenol® (1 or 2 tablets) when needed.
- Pain medications can make you constipated. To prevent constipation, drink lots of fluids (3 to 5 glasses of water every day. Each glass should be about 8oz.). Eat foods that are high in bulk (bran, fruit, for example). If you have not had a bowel movement within 72 hours after your surgery, take 30ml of Milk of Magnesia®. You can get this from your pharmacy without a prescription.

Problems to watch for

If you have any of the following problems, call your surgeon, or call (416) 340-3155 and ask to speak to the Hand Program/Plastic resident on call, or call your family doctor, or go to the nearest hospital emergency department:

- Excessive swelling: Your hand or foot swells a lot.
- Bleeding from the area that has been operated on: Put pressure on the area that is bleeding (for 15 minutes).
the bleeding does not stop and soaks the dressing call your surgeon or (416) 340-3155.

- **Blue skin or cold fingers or toes:** Your fingers or toes change in colour, feeling or movement.
- **Severe pain:** You have a very bad pain that does not go away, even after taking the pain medication.
- **Fever:** Your temperature is higher than 38°C or 101°F.

☐ **No follow-up appointment needed.**
☐ **Your follow-up appointment:**

Doctor: ____________________________________________

Date: ___________________ Time: __________

Location: _________________ Clinic: _______________

**Special Instructions**

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http://www.uhn.ca/