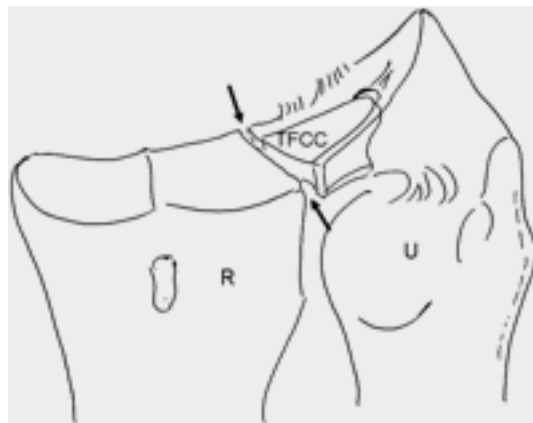


Post-Operative Instructions for Wrist TFCC Surgery

Purpose of surgery

The purpose of your surgery is to help relieve you of ulnar sided wrist pain you experience due to a disruption of the normal integrity of the TFCC (triangular fibrocartilage complex). This includes addressing both the TFCC itself, and the relationship between your radius and ulna at the level of your wrist joint. For the TFCC, this ligamentous complex is either repaired or debrided. A repair is performed when the tear occurs in an area where the TFCC has a direct blood supply – the periphery of this structure. On the other hand, a debridement is performed if your tear is located within an area of the TFCC that does not have a direct blood supply – the central portion of this structure. In this latter case, the tear is incapable of direct healing. Studies have shown that debriding these central tears mechanically reduces the loads across the ulna thereby reducing pain. Finally, your procedure may also include an ulnar shortening procedure as part of your surgery (you will know this by the time of your surgery). This is often recommended if your ulna is relatively ‘taller’ than your radius as studies have demonstrated poorer outcomes if your ulna is left ‘taller’ than your radius.



Morisawa, et al, 2007

What to expect after surgery?

You will have a splint or cast covering your arm from elbow to wrist to keep you from either moving your wrist or rotating your forearm. You will also not be able to move your elbow.

What should you do to help recover?

To help your recovery, keep your fingers moving. Make sure you can make a fist with your fingers and completely straighten them. Make sure you can move your thumb across your hand towards your pinky finger and fully straighten it. Repeat these motions and efforts throughout the day, especially in the first few days following surgery to keep internal scarring from becoming an issue.

Keep your pain under control. I do expect that you will be sore for the first 1-2 weeks, especially if you had an ulnar shortening. Take the prescription pain

medicine as prescribed for the first day, and decide the next to what extent you need it. Keeping yourself comfortable will allow you to keep your fingers moving and minimize internal scarring from the surgery. If you had a 'block' for your anesthetic, you should have great pain relief for anywhere from 8-16 hours from the time of the block. Please do not wait for the block to wear off before you start taking any medicine, or you will likely have trouble controlling your pain – so, make sure you have it in your system before it wears off.

How should you take care of your dressing?

Keep the dressing, and all the skin covered, clean and dry. Keep the splint covered in a waterproof setup when showering. Your splint will not be removed until your first post-operative office visit.

What should concern you?

Please refer to our website (www.HandCenterGA.com) for helping you to understand our general concerns following any operation. I would want you to contact us should you experience persistent numbness/tingling of fingers, any increasing pain, and if the splint feels tight and is squeezing your wrist/forearm. Please call me at (404)-255-0226 with any concerns.

When should you come in for your first Post-operative visit?

Your first visit will be within 7-10 days of the operation. You will be placed into a hard long arm cast on this visit. That visit should be arranged during your pre-operative appointment. If not, call 404-255-0226 to make that appointment.

Do you need therapy?

A formal, supervised therapy program is a critical component of your recovery. You will spend the first 4-6 weeks of your post-operative time in a long arm cast. You will then transition to a removable splint/brace that has to be custom designed by a therapist, and you will begin formal therapy at this time. We should ensure that these arrangements are made ahead of time.

What activities can you do?

I want you to curtail activities with the operative wrist. Only use your operative arm for activities you can accomplish pain-free, or relatively pain-free. I do not want you to 'make' it hurt as this will not help your recovery. You should be able to perform your activities of daily living like grooming, eating and dressing.

You may use a sling to support your arm if you are more comfortable that way, but you do not need to use it. You will likely enjoy the support for the first couple of days following surgery, though.