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CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

INDICATIONS:

The indications for surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome are numbness and/or progressive weakness or aching pain in the hand that is resistant to conservative measures by physical therapy or wrist splinting. When the neurologic loss is progressive, it is an especially good time to move along towards surgery. The indications again are weakness, numbness, and aching pain that is becoming severe.

GOALS:

By releasing the nerve from the pressure upon it, I hope to greatly decrease your wrist pain and maximize your potential to regain strength and sensation in your hand. This will prevent any further loss of strength or sensation.

PROCEDURE:

The procedure itself involves a monitored anesthetic wherein you are not intubated. Although you are awake and breathing on your own, you will not remember any of it. I then use local anesthetic in your hand after a very careful surgical preparation followed by an inch-and-a-half incision starting at the wrist crease and extending along the direction of your ring finger. After making this incision, I dissect down and free up the nerve. When I am finished, there will be no pressure on your median nerve at all. I then close in two layers of stitches. The last layer will need to be removed in about two weeks.

RISKS:

The risks of this operation include but are not limited to the following:

1. Bleeding. There is a very small risk of bleeding. My average blood loss is less than 10 cc.
2. Infection. Hands are particularly vulnerable to infection, not because of the surgery but because people use their hands after surgery and secondarily infect them. You have to be particularly careful to keep the wound clean and dry as well as keep your hands out of dirty environments. It is very important to keep the stitch line dry.
3. Nerve damage. There is a very small risk of nerve damage which can cause even worse weakness and numbness in the hand although the odds of that are extremely low. We hope that you regain all of your function in your hand including sensation and strength. However the main goal is to prevent further loss of strength or sensation.

If you want more information on this procedure, please visit my website at www.timjohansmd.com.

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