

Williams AM, Paker PA, Platt AJ. The impact of dressings on recovery from carpal tunnel decompression. J Plast Reconstr Aesthet Surg 2008;61:1493-5.

Design: Randomized clinical trial

Brief summary of findings:

- 100 patients (78 women, 22 men, mean age 56) operated on for CTS at a hand surgery department in the UK
- The facility performed 708 carpal tunnel decompressions in a 12 month period, but eligibility and exclusion criteria for these 100 patients were not specified
- After identical standard open decompression, patients were randomized to a bulky gauze, wool, and crepe dressing for either 2 weeks (n=51) or for only 1 day (n=49)
- At the 2 week follow-up, the groups did not differ on symptom severity or functional outcome
- No complications occurred in either group

Authors' conclusions:

- Patients should be advised to wear a bulky dressing for at least 24 hours after CTS decompression, after which they may be advised that they may remove the dressing if they feel the need; if they feel the need to keep the dressing in place for 2 weeks, this is also fine
- Early removal of outer dressings does not appear to affect the outcome of surgery

Comments:

- No information is given about who was eligible for inclusion into the study, or who was excluded
- Randomization method is not described

Assessment: Inadequate for an evidence statement for postoperative treatment of CTS, but is compatible with a recommendation for encouraging early mobilization