

Post Operative Instructions: Hand Surgery

You are recovering from hand/wrist surgery. The following information is to help make your recovery as smooth and rapid as possible.

1. Keep your dressing on for 5 days, after which it may be removed and incisions covered with band-aids. Avoid getting the surgical dressing wet. You may shower with a bag over the dressing. Once dressing removed you may wash your hands and shower. Do not submerge the incisions underwater (No dishes, hot tubs, pools, lakes, swamps..etc). Keep the wounds dry until your first office visit after surgery. Post-operative bleeding is not unusual. Reinforcing your dressing is alright. If you have any concerns about the amount of bleeding, please call the office.
2. Post-operative pain is common, but should be controlled by the prescriptions given to you. Your need for prescription pain medication should decrease by 3-4 days after surgery, and you should begin to take your usual over-the-counter pain medicine (i.e. ibuprofen or Tylenol) as directed on the bottle. Also, if you were given antibiotics, make sure to take them as prescribed. Do NOT drive a car or operate machinery while taking narcotic pain medication.
3. Use your cold therapy unit or place a bag of ice over the incision as directed until you are seen in the office. Wear it over your clothing. Your sling should be worn at all times except for your therapy.
4. When sleeping or resting, inclined on a pillow under the forearm for support may provide better comfort. Do not engage in any lifting or repetitive activities until seen in the office. You may return to sedentary work only or school 3 - 4 days after surgery, if pain is tolerable.

5. Your post-operative therapy begins on the day of surgery. Begin shoulder, elbow, hand and finger exercises. Wrist motion only within comfort. You may use your other arm to assist the operative side with motion. Complete these exercises 3 - 4 times per day until your first post-operative visit.

6. If you have a fever over 101.5°, shaking, chills, increasing pain after the first 3-4 days post surgery, color changes in the wrist or hand, redness around the incisions, continuous drainage from the incisions, or difficulty breathing, please contact us, or if severe, go to the Emergency Room. Moderate pain is expected for several days, but should gradually diminish.

7. You will be seen in the office 5 - 10 days after surgery for follow-up. Please call the office to schedule the appointment. If you have any questions or concerns please call us at (607) 734-4110.