

PERIOPERATIVE SERVICES

Post-Operative Instructions

Hand and Wrist Surgery

PAIN:

Some pain after surgery is normal for 2 - 3 days. Take your pain pills as instructed. Tylenol™ or Advil™ may be all you need for pain. If you feel sick you may take an “over the counter” Gravol™ for the nausea.

OPERATIVE SITE:

You can expect a dressing and/or cast on your hand/wrist. This is designed to hold your hand/wrist in a position for comfort and healing. To help reduce swelling/pain, keep your hand elevated above the level of your heart for several days.

When lying or sitting, keep your hand on 2 – 3 pillows. Unless instructed you are encouraged to move your fingers to prevent stiffness and increase circulation. When standing, hold your hand at shoulder level. Do not get your dressing wet as it may contain plaster and must be protected. When showering etc., insert the dressing into a large plastic bag and seal with an elastic band above dressing on forearm.

ACTIVITY:

Resume your normal activities as tolerated or as advised by your surgeon.

Driving – You may resume driving when you have full control of your hand/wrist and are pain free **or** requiring minimal pain medication. You cannot drive when taking narcotics for pain. Please contact your automobile insurance provider to verify your policy and ensure insurance coverage is appropriate.

Sports – resume when advised by your surgeon.

DIET:

Fluids to light diet as tolerated the day of surgery. The next day resume your normal diet as tolerated with extra fiber and fluids as pain medications can/have a tendency to cause constipation.

FOLLOW UP:

Your surgeon will advise you when to return for follow up, either at his/her office or clinic. If you are a Day Surgery patient, a nurse may call you the day after to talk about any concerns you may have.

CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE →



If you have any problems or concerns, contact your surgeon or the surgeon on-call through his/her office. If unable to reach either, contact the hospital Call Centre at (613)721-2000 and ask for the surgeon on-call for Plastics or Orthopedics as appropriate.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

If you have had a local anesthetic be careful not to injure your hand/wrist, as you may not have full sensation for several hours after surgery.

If you have a cast you will be given a “Cast Care Instruction Sheet”.

DO NOT TAKE ANY MEDICATION CONTAINING ASPIRIN UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY YOUR SURGEON.

Call your surgeon immediately or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have any of the following complaints:

- Persistent numbness or tingling in the fingertips or finger is cold and blue. (*This may indicate your dressing is TOO TIGHT*) despite elevating your hand for 1 hour.
- Severe pain not relieved with your pain medication or severe pain that keeps you awake at night OR awakens you from your sleep.
- Signs and symptoms of infection – wound red hot and swollen, yellow/green or foul smelling discharge.
- Fever, chills occurring more than 24 hours after your procedure.

Do not attempt to revise or remove the dressing yourself unless advised by your surgeon.

Patient safety is very important to Queensway Carleton Hospital and this information is provided to patients and their families to help inform you of your essential role in your own safety.

The information contained on this sheet is not specific medical advice, nor a substitute for medical advice. For your safety, it is advised that you speak with your doctor and healthcare team about your particular healthcare needs.

Protect yourself! Clean your hands frequently and ask your healthcare providers and visitors to do the same. Clean hands saves lives