



Hand Surgery: Postoperative Instructions

Activity

Unless directed otherwise and if your fingers are not covered by the splint, do your best to gently bend and straighten your finger many times a day to prevent contractures (scarred in joints). If your elbow is free, make sure to bend and straighten the elbow fully as well.

No lifting anything heavier than a coffee cup unless directed otherwise.

In order to prevent blood clots, walk around as much as possible following this surgery.

Wound Care

Keep your hand elevated higher than your heart using pillows at home - you can place your hand on your opposite shoulder while walking around.

Keep your splint or dressing clean and dry, do not remove unless directed otherwise

You may shower or sponge bathe but should keep dressing dry at all times; do not submerge in water.

Do not put any ointments or antibiotic creams on your incision. These will not make it heal faster.

Pain

Pain is a normal and expected part of recovering from surgery, but positioning and medications can help.

Use pillows or a sling to keep your hand above your elbow and your elbow above your heart to decrease or prevent swelling. **Elevate your hand above your heart as much as possible.**

Use ice on the wound but make sure to not get the dressings wet.

Medicines

If your primary care doctor is OK with you doing so, you may stagger doses of ibuprofen and acetaminophen (take a dose of ibuprofen, then 3 hours later take a dose of acetaminophen, then a dose of ibuprofen, etc). **Do not take more than directed on the bottle.**

If prescribed opioid pain medicine, take it only for breakthrough pain not controlled by over the counter pain medicine. Many people only need opioid pain medicines for a few days, please wean off of opioid pain medicine over the course of a few weeks. If there is acetaminophen in the prescription pain medicine, do not take with additional acetaminophen (tylenol).

Never drive or drink alcohol while taking opioid pain medication.

Narcotic (opioid) pain medications can cause constipation. To avoid this, increase your fluid intake and you may take an over the counter stool softener such as Colace.

Resume your pre-hospital medications. You should follow up with your primary care Physician (PCP) regarding new prescriptions and refills of your home medications.

If you were given an antibiotic please complete the full course unless directed otherwise.

Diet

You may resume your normal diet.

Follow Up

Call to make an appointment - (518)453-9088 - to see Dr. Donovan for follow up 10-14 days after the surgery unless directed otherwise. Please inform the scheduler that you have had surgery and you need to be seen within 2 weeks of the procedure if there is any confusion about your appointment.

Please call our office (518) 453-9088 if:

If you have a fever greater than 101°F, chills, nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, leg pain, increased incisional pain not relieved with pain medication.

If you notice signs of wound infection (redness/tenderness at or purulent discharge from your incision).

If you have other concerns.

Please call 911 or go to the closest Emergency Department for any life threatening emergencies.