

Hand & Wrist Surgery Postoperative Instructions

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SWELLING

Swelling is natural after surgery for the first week. Reducing swelling helps speed recovery and will lessen your pain. The following two suggestions can help reduce your swelling:

1. **ELEVATION:** Elevate your arm above your heart. The best way to do this comfortably is to lie flat on your back with your hand resting on a few pillows. Elevate your hand for at least 5 days after surgery.
2. **ICE:** An icepack applied directly to your postoperative dressing will reduce swelling and inflammation of the surgical site. Icing can be particularly helpful for the first 3 days after surgery. Package your ice in plastic to avoid getting your postoperative dressing wet.

WOUND CARE

The postoperative dressing can be left intact until you see your doctor within 10-14 days from surgery. If swelling is occurring in the fingers and is not responding to elevation and ice, then loosening the outer ace bandage can sometimes help. If you had surgery for trigger finger, you may change your dressing 3 days after surgery if you are comfortable with performing a dressing change. This small wound can be covered with a Band-aid. The Band-aid should be changed daily. The wound should be kept clean and dry until suture removal.

ACTIVITIES

Some or all of your fingers may have been left free of your dressings so that you can move them. Finger movement, if allowed, can reduce stiffness and swelling.

MEDICATIONS

Pain medications have been prescribed. Please take them as directed. Your pharmacist may be able to provide information about drug interactions with other medications you are taking. Pain medications can often cause nausea, constipation and itching. Do not drink alcohol, drive or make important decisions while taking narcotic pain medications.

DIET

Begin with liquids and light foods. Advance to your normal diet once liquids and lighter foods are well tolerated.

CONTACTING YOUR DOCTOR

Typically follow-up appointments are scheduled for 10-14 days after surgery. Occasionally you will be asked to follow-up earlier. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office.

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