

Hand and Wrist Surgery

Before the day of surgery:

- Ask your doctor if you need to stop blood-thinning medicines like aspirin or coumadin.

On the day of surgery:

- You will need to arrive 2 hours before surgery. A nurse will interview you, start an IV and answer any questions you have.

Return appointment

- Keep your scheduled appointment at your surgeon's office.

Diet

- After surgery you will be offered clear liquids. Gradually advance to your usual diet.

Activities and restrictions

- Keep affected hand/wrist elevated above heart level as much as possible for 48-72 hours. This will help to prevent pain, throbbing and swelling.
- When standing- bend arm at elbow so that the fingers are pointed toward the ceiling.
- When sitting- rest on the arm or the back of a chair or on a stack of pillows in lap.
- When sleeping- place extremity up on pillows, above the level of the heart.
- Your doctor may have you apply ice to affected area for 48-72 hours. Do not allow ice to make the dressing wet.
- Your doctor may have you start exercises, these may include:
 - Make a complete fist and then completely straighten the fingers 10 times every hour starting the day after surgery.
 - Put your hand on top of your head and move your shoulder 5 times a day to prevent stiffness.
 - Bend and straighten your elbow at least 10 times a day to prevent stiffness.
- You may have instructions to avoid moving your finger and/or thumb.
- Follow your doctors order concerning driving, returning to work, exercising and lifting.
- Your doctor may have you place your arm in a sling.

Discomfort

- Take prescribed pain medication as directed by your surgeon. Narcotics should be taken with food to help avoid stomach upset

- As you continue to recover, you will need less pain medication. Tylenol or Advil may be used with the consent of your surgeon.

Medications

- Resume your regular medications unless instructed otherwise.

Dressing Care

- You may bathe with a waterproof covering over the dressing.
- Keep dressings clean and dry until instructed to remove or see your surgeon in office.

Reasons to contact your surgeon

- If the temperature is 100 degrees or higher
- Discomfort not controlled with your pain medication
- Excessive swelling, redness, drainage or foul odor from you incision
- Prolonged nausea or vomiting
- Any other questions, concerns or problems that you may have