

## **POST-OPERATIVE CARE AFTER HAND SURGERY**

Please keep hand elevated (higher than the heart) for the first 24+ hours following surgery. This will decrease the amount of swelling which sometimes occurs after hand surgery. You should move the finger(s) outside the splint.

### **Pain Management**

- Regular or Extra Strength Tylenol should provide adequate pain relief. Take 1-2 tablets (325-650 mg) every 6 hours. Use of an anti-inflammatory is also beneficial (Advil, Ibuprofen).
- If you have been provided a prescription for pain relief (eg Tylenol #3), please take as directed.

### **Bleeding**

This is fairly common in the first few hours after surgery. If bleeding occurs, apply constant pressure at the surgery site for at least 15 minutes, and elevate the hand.

### **Wound Care**

- Patient with dressings:**
  - Keep the dressing dry. If the dressing becomes wet it will need to be changed. Utilizing a plastic bag over the dressing will allow you to bathe more easily (a few drops of water is no problem).
  - You may remove your own dressing \_\_\_\_\_ days after surgery.
  - Once the dressing is removed, you may wash your hand normally with soap and water. Apply a small amount of Polysporin Ointment and wrap in a small dry dressing or bandage. This should be changed once daily.
- Patients with splints/casts:**
  - Keep your splint/cast clean and dry. If the splint is too tight, if you have numbness in the fingers tips, or your fingers tips have a blueish discoloration, contact Dr. Demianczuk, your family doctor, or go to your local emergency room.
  - You should see the hand therapist within 10 days of your surgery to have a custom splint created. The therapist will remove your cast and create a new plastic splint.

**St. Paul's Hospital –604-806-806-8114**

**Vancouver General Hospital –604-875-4444**

**Westside Physio & Hand Clinic –604-731-6225**

**Other: \_\_\_\_\_**

- Leave your splint/cast intact. It will be removed by Dr. Demianczuk on your next appointment.

Post op instructions continued.....

**Activity**

- Elevate the hand. It should be held above heart level at all times while awake. A sling is not appropriate because the hand slips too low. At night, keep the hand/ forearm resting on a pillow.
- Take it easy and avoid injury to the surgery site.
- It is **very important** to remember to exercise all your fingers that have been left out of the bandage.
- You may use your hand for light activities after surgery, but heavy lifting and strenuous activities are not advisable.
- Driving is permitted 24 hours after surgery if you have had a general anesthetic. If you have had your procedure done under local anesthetic (no sedation), there is no restriction to driving.

**Suture Removal**

- You have sutures that need to be removed in \_\_\_\_\_ days. This can be done through Dr. Demianczuk’s office or by your Family Physician. If Dr. Demianczuk is to remove your sutures, call the office the day after surgery to set up an appointment time.
- You have dissolving sutures. These do not need to be removed

**Please call the office if you experience any of the following:**

- Any severe bleeding through the bandage.
- Discoloration of the fingers.
- Numbness of the fingers.
- Increasing pain in the fingers after 2-3 days, not improving with medication.
- Fever (temperature higher than 38°C) or Chills.
- Any other abnormalities or concerns.

**Follow –Up**

Please call the office at 604-806-6365 the day after surgery to arrange for your first post-operative appointment. Appointment time: \_\_\_\_\_

- Suite 514, 1200 Burrard Street, Vancouver
- St. Paul’s Hospital, Outpatient Department

Post Operative Hand Therapy – should be started in \_\_\_\_\_ from surgery, please call as soon as possible to arrange your hand therapy appointment. We have listed a few options for you.

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**Other: \_\_\_\_\_**

We want your surgical experience to be as pleasant as possible. Please feel free to contact our office should any problems arise.