



## **Post-op Instructions for Trigger Finger Release**

### **Troy Berg, MD and John Drawbert, MD**

These instructions are to compliment the information given to you by the nursing staff or other health care professionals. They cover many of the common questions.

#### **Wound Care:**

- Immediately after surgery, a bulky dressing will be placed on your hand and wrist. Your dressing should be kept clean and dry. The dressing can be removed 3 days after surgery, and the hand lightly cleaned with soap and water. The incision should not be soaked in water, such as in a bathtub, or vigorously rubbed to clean. You may dry the incision by patting it lightly with a clean, dry towel. A new, clean dressing should then be applied over the incision, such as a band aid. Dressings should be changed daily and as needed for any bleeding or drainage.
- When showering, it is recommended that a waterproof, occlusive dressing be placed over top of the incision area, such as an opsite dressing for the first days. You may also use a plastic bag or saran wrap secured with tape over the area.
- The incision should be inspected daily, and any abnormal drainage or excessive bleeding should be reported immediately.
- Your sutures will be removed at your clinic visit with Dr. Berg or Dr. Drawbert, 10-14 days after surgery.

#### **Pain and Swelling:**

- Elevate your hand to decrease swelling and discomfort. Mild to moderate swelling is expected after surgery. Your hand should be elevated above the level of your heart for best results.
- You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication for pain management. Please take this as directed, and do not exceed the recommended dosing. Try to wean down as tolerated. These medications can cause constipation and you may want to use an over the counter stool softener. Tylenol products may be used instead of the prescribed pain medication, but should not be used with the narcotic pain medication as they both contain acetaminophen, and overdose can occur. You may supplement your pain medication by using ibuprofen or Aleve as needed. If a refill of pain medication is needed, please call

the office during regular business hours, Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on weekends, so please plan ahead.

- Ice may be applied to the surgical area to help with pain, Avoid direct contact with the skin, as this may result in damage to the skin. Instead, wrap an ice pack or bag of ice in a towel before placing on the hand. You may ice your finger as often as you prefer, but allow 20-30 minutes between ice applications.

### **Driving:**

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills (plain Tylenol, ibuprofen, or Aleve is allowed). Also, you must feel strong and alert, and able to grip the steering wheel with both hands.

### **Exercises/Activity:**

It is important to begin finger exercises after surgery to avoid finger stiffness. Exercises should be done throughout the day, and are especially important during the first 4 weeks after surgery. Do the exercises 3-4 times a day, for 5-10 repetitions each. Exercises include opening and closing the hand, tendon gliding exercises (see below), and finger exercises (isolate the tip of the affected finger and bend and straighten the tip). Heavy lifting or strenuous activity should be avoided until permitted by Dr. Drawbert or Dr. Berg. Hand therapy may be recommended for you following surgery.

### **Tendon Gliding Exercises**



### **Follow-up:**

You will see Dr. Berg/Dr. Drawbert in the office 10-14 days after surgery.

**Adverse Signs or Symptoms:**

Occasionally patients experience troubles after surgery and need additional medical attention. Such conditions that require medical attention include the following.

- Fever of greater than 101 degrees F
- New or different colored drainage from your surgical incision
- Chest pain or shortness of breath

*Seek medical attention immediately* if you develop sudden chest pain, shortness of breath, a rapid heartbeat, lightheadedness or dizziness.

**Questions/Concerns:**

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to call our office, Monday-Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.