

Post-op Instructions for Tendon/Nerve Repair

These instructions are to compliment the information given by the nursing staff and therapists. They cover many of the common questions.

WOUND CARE

Dressings are to be kept clean and dry. A small amount of clear drainage or bleeding is normal. If the ace wrap feels too tight, you may loosen it and re-wrap it.

The splint should remain on until you follow-up in the clinic with your surgeon about 2 weeks after surgery, unless otherwise directed by your surgeon.

When showering, please place plastic bag over the arm up to the shoulder and secure it with tape. You may wrap your arm with Glad Press & Seal plastic wrap instead of a plastic bag. To keep the splint dry, you may wrap a small towel around the splint prior to applying the plastic bag or wrap. Pat the splint dry immediately with a clean towel if it does get slightly wet. If you have been instructed to remove your splint, you may shower and get the incision wet and pat dry with a clean towel. Then recover with Band-Aids or gauze dressing.

If purulent drainage (thick white or greenish in color) is coming from the wound, or the wound has increasing redness, or if you are having a temperature of 101 or higher, please report these symptoms to your surgeon or the doctor on call.

Remember you are to be non-weight bearing with your surgical hand/wrist. This means no lifting at all. Please call our office if you have any questions regarding your restrictions.

PAIN & SWELLING

To lessen pain and swelling, you may ice after surgery. Cover your splint with a thin towel or pillowcase. Put the ice in a zip lock bag or towel and place over the surgical site. We recommend 20 minutes, 2-3 times per day. Do not place ice or cooling devices directly on the skin for prolonged periods of time as it may damage the skin.

Narcotic pain medication may be prescribed for use after you leave the hospital. 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 or Ibuprofen (Aleve, Motrin, etc.) may be used instead of the prescribed pain medication. The prescribed narcotic medications should not be taken at the same time as plain Tylenol. If you are not having much pain, you can take ONLY Aleve or Ibuprofen or similar anti-inflammatory medication. If a refill of medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on weekends, so please plan ahead.

Swelling to some degree is common after surgery. To reduce swelling, elevation is very helpful. Elevate the hand above the heart level. Elevation for 30 minutes every 2 hours is a good initial recommendation.

Excessive pain and swelling should be reported to your surgeon. Flexion/Extension of the fingers (opening and closing your hands) will also help to relieve swelling and prevent stiffness.

EXERCISES

Gentle finger range of motion exercises can and SHOULD begin the day of surgery, unless otherwise directed by your surgeon.

DRIVING

To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills (plain Tylenol or Ibuprofen is allowed). Also, you must feel strong and alert.

FOLLOW-UP

You may have an occupational or physical therapy appointment prior to your appointment with your surgeon where they may make you a removable splint. This should be worn at all times except for showering, unless otherwise directed by your surgeon.

Make sure an appointment has been scheduled for you at Chippewa Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine for approximately 2 weeks after surgery.

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