

Hand Surgery

After Visit Summary

This is general information. Please see your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Surgery

You are having surgery on your hand, finger(s) or both.

Before the Surgery

- Tell your health care provider if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood-thinner medicine.
- Remove any jewelry or piercings.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive after the surgery.

Pain Relief

- Raise your hand and forearm above your heart with one or two pillows when you lie in bed.
- Hold your hand and forearm above your heart or level with your heart when you walk. Do not let your hand hang below your waist.

- Use a cold pack pain relief.
 - Place a clean, dry towel on your wrist.
 - Put the cold pack on the towel.
 - Leave the cold pack on for 20 minutes at a time.
 - Apply the ice pack any time you want.
- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.

Activity

- Your health care provider will tell you when it's OK for you to shower, drive, return to work, exercise, lift, and have sex.
- Follow your health care provider's directions for when to wear a sling.
- Resume your normal activities. Follow your health care provider's directions.
- Do not overuse your hand. Avoid repetitive hand or finger use (such as typing).
- Do not open jars or grip objects with your surgery hand.
- If you have a splint on your wrist and hand, you may need help with eating, dressing and bathing.
- Avoid contact sports or any lifting until your health care provider says it's OK.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

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Exercise After Surgery

To keep strength and motion in your hand and arm, you must exercise. Start these simple exercises the day of your surgery:

- Extend and fully bend your exposed fingers for a count of 10. Do these exercises at least four times each day.
- Keep your arm above your waist, straighten your elbow and bend it back for a count of 10. Do this exercise at least four times each day.
- Wiggle your fingers to promote blood circulation and keep swelling down.

Incision Care

- Keep the dressing, cast or both dry. Do not remove either until your health care provider gives you directions.
- Do not use anything to scratch under the cast.
- Steri-Strips® (paper-like tape) may have been placed on your incision. They can get wet in the shower. You may peel them off after 7 days.
- Follow any directions your health care provider gives you.
- If your wound has staples, follow your health care provider's directions.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Drink more liquids.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- you have a temperature of 101 F or higher
- your hand:
 - becomes dusky-colored (bluish purple)
 - is hot or cold to the touch
 - becomes numb, tingles or swells
 - has a foul-smelling odor
- you have new pain or pain you can't control
- you have red bloody drainage that soaks the dressing, cast or both
- you have signs of infection at your incision site:
 - pain
 - swelling
 - redness
 - odor
 - warmth
 - green or yellow discharge
- you are unable to get out of bed
- you have nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- you have any questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

Please keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.