



(EPL) Extensor Pollicis Longus Tendon Repair Dr. Bakker's Post-op Protocol

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING SURGERY:

- After surgery, your forearm and hand will be in a large bandage and plaster splint. Please **DO NOT** remove this. Try to keep your bandage clean and dry.
- To minimize swelling, you must keep your hand lifted up to your shoulder level.
- When sitting or lying, you should use pillows to support your surgically affected extremity, especially when sleeping.

REFERRAL TO HAND THERAPY:

- You should schedule an appointment with hand therapy 5-7 days following your surgery. Depending on the clinic where hand therapy will be performed, please contact our Edina office at 952-456-7000 or our Plymouth office at 763-520-7870.
- The therapist will remove your post-operative dressing and fabricate you a custom forearm based splint. The splint will maintain your wrist and thumb in the protected position. Your fingers will not be included in the splint.

WEEKS 0-1:

- Post-operative splint fabrication in Hand Therapy (5-7 days).
- Recheck with Dr. Bakker at one week for a post-operative evaluation.
- Perform gentle range of motion activities with your fingers and thumb as instructed by your therapist.
- No heavy lifting or gripping with your surgical hand.
- Ice 20-30 minutes three times daily.
- Transition to Tylenol.
- Attend hand therapy (OT) 1-2 times weekly.
- Your therapist will provide for you an exercise program to increase range of motion and review the progression to recovery. Adherence to the therapy program is advised to prevent a tendon rupture.

WEEK 2-6:

- Discontinuation of narcotics is expected, continue with Tylenol and ibuprofen as needed.
- Recheck with Dr. Bakker at week 2 to have your stitches removed.
- Continue with Hand Therapy, emphasizing increased motion, swelling management, maintenance of tendon excursion and scar tissue management.
- The custom splint should be worn with all activities, but may be removed for bathing and hand exercises.
- Your therapist will review precautions to avoid a tendon rupture.
- No heavy lifting.
- No power gripping.
- You may get your surgical area wet after sutures are removed, but it is best to avoid submerging your incision for 1-2 days.

WEEKS 6-8:

- Return to the clinic at six weeks post-operatively for re-evaluation.
- Continue with OT with the goals of improving strength and pain free range of motion.
- You may begin light strengthening exercises with the hand. To start with 1 lb. and increase as instructed.
- You may begin weaning and discontinue from splint use at 6 weeks.
- Transition to activities as tolerated, may begin progressive lifting and gripping.

WEEKS 8-12:

- Follow up at week twelve for re-evaluation or as needed if there are no concerns.
- Progressive strengthening in Hand Therapy, with discharge being expected during this time frame.
- Perform all activities as tolerated.