



TWIN CITIES ORTHOPEDICS

Post-Operative Instructions for Open Reduction/Internal Fixation Of the Wrist

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What To Expect After Surgery

- After surgery it is normal for your hand and fingers to continue to be numb for a period of time due to the local medication used at the time of surgery. You should begin to take the pain medication given to you, with food and on a schedule, before you regain feeling in your upper extremity. Pain after the local medications wear off is expected. After the first 48 hours, the pain medication can be used as needed. Please do not operate heavy machinery, drink alcohol or drive while using narcotic pain medication.
- You may use ICE to the areas above or below the splint, as needed, but do not apply ice directly against the skin. Icing the fingers and upper arm also helps with swelling.
- You may have a sling to help support your arm while it is still numb. The sling can be used for comfort until the sensation returns in the upper extremity.
- There will be a well-padded splint on the upper extremity which will be removed at your first post-surgery appointment. The splint should be left in place and kept clean and dry.
- You will have a small drain under your elbow dressing. The first day after surgery you can remove the drain. A gentle pull on the tubing will allow the drain to slide safely out from under the dressing. There may be a small amount of discomfort, but no pain.
- Please make an appointment to be seen by the hand therapist one hour after your first post-surgery appointment. You will be fitted for a brace you can use for support as well as start a specific therapy protocol for your arm at that time.
- Your first appointment for evaluation after surgery should be about 2 weeks from surgery. **If you don't already have appointments in place, please call Dr. Meyer's care team at 651-351-2639.**

What Can I Do Safely With My Arm?

We advise that you avoid any activities with the surgical extremity until you are seen after surgery. If you work a heavy labor job, you may need restrictions for a period of time. We can address this at your regular appointment. You can gently move your fingers as able in the splint. They will be sore and stiff, but gentle movement will encourage range of motion and minimize swelling.

When Should I Call My Surgeon?

- Pain is not controlled by pain medication or pain and numbness getting progressively more severe, including minimal use of fingers.
- Increased redness or drainage noted about the incision
- Fever over 101 degrees.
- Prolonged nausea or vomiting, difficulty voiding, or side effects from pain medications.
- Skin sores or blistering noted around the skin edges of the splint.
- Severe pain or difficulty pulling the drain.

If any of these items occur or you have any questions about your symptoms, please call Dr. Meyer's care team at 651-351-2639.