



Distal Radius ORIF Instructions

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You have had a surgical procedure. The instructions below are meant to provide you with the information you need to manage your dressings, pain medications, and activities.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU GET HOME

- If you had a nerve block, your entire arm will be numb for 12-16 hours. Once you begin to regain sensation in your arm, you may take Tylenol and an anti-inflammatory such as Motrin as needed for pain relief. You may take a narcotic pain medication along with a stool softener as needed to manage severe pain.
- You may continue your normal home medications.
- For 2-3 days post-operatively elevate the extremity above the level of your heart to reduce swelling.
- Apply ice to the extremity 3-4 times a day (20 minutes on/20 minutes off) for 3-4 days or until the swelling subsides. You may ice with a barrier on your splint but be sure the splint does not get wet.
- Bruising and discoloration is common following surgery.

WOUND CARE

- Keep your splint **clean and dry**. If it becomes wet or disheveled, call the office to make an appointment to have it examined and changed.
- When showering, protect your splint with a plastic bag. Place a bag over the splint and tape it closed, cover the tape with a towel, and cover the first bag with a towel or another bag and tape this closed above the towel.
- If you are experiencing any of the following call our office or the doctor on call immediately:
 - Fever greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Chills
 - Excessive redness, swelling, or drainage from incisions

ACTIVITY

- You are encouraged to move your fingers and thumb as much as possible within the restrictions of your bandage or splint.
- You may use your hand and fingers for light activities, such as typing, feeding yourself, and brushing your hair.
- Do not lift, push, or pull greater than 1-2 pounds until your follow up appointment.

FOLLOW UP

- A follow up appointment will be made for you at the time that your procedure is scheduled. This is typically 10-14 days after surgery. Please call the office if you have any questions regarding your follow up appointment.
- At your first follow up, your sutures will be removed and repeat x-rays will be taken.
- A second follow up appointment with x-rays will be scheduled for 6 weeks after surgery.

POST-OPERATIVE THERAPY

- Your first therapy appointment will be made for around 7 days after surgery. You will be transitioned to a custom splint at that time. The goals of hand therapy are to improve your range of motion while still limiting your weight bearing and activities to prevent fracture displacement. Hand therapy will guide you in range of motion exercises, scar massage, and other modalities to both improve your motion and decrease incision sensitivity.
- Under the guidance of therapy, and around weeks 6-8, you will transition from range of motion focused exercises to strengthening exercises. You will begin to wean out of your splint and return to normal activities and weight bearing around this time.
- By week 12, you should be feeling reasonably strong and able to return to most normal activities.
- The above general timeline may be lengthened or shortened depending on the degree of healing seen on your follow-up x-rays.