



INSTRUCTIONS AFTER HAND SURGERY

Following surgery, your hand may be immobilized in a splint or cast. It is important that you follow these simple instructions:

1. Keep your hand elevated above the level of your heart (which is at the level of your nipple). While sitting in a chair or lying in bed, place your arm on pillows to keep it elevated. While walking around, keep your hand elevated on your opposite shoulder. You may stop elevation when your hand no longer throbs when lowered (usually 3-5 days).
2. Place a large plastic bag over your splint or dressings when you shower/bathe to prevent it from getting wet. Place 2 rubber bands above the splint to keep the bag in place and to avoid leaking.
3. After surgery, use the exposed fingers for light activities, such as eating, dressing, typing and texting. This will help prevent these fingers from getting stiff.
4. You may have been prescribed antibiotics: _____
5. It is normal to feel some pain after hand surgery. However, you may have been prescribed pain medication that should be taken with some food: _____
6. Take the prescribed Zofran in case of nausea.
7. Take over the counter stool softener with the pain medication to prevent constipation.

You may have had a long acting numbing injection for post-operative pain relief. It is normal to experience profound numbness for 4-12 hrs after surgery and some numbness up to 24 hrs after surgery.

SMOKING interferes with healing and makes painful problems more painful. Problems after surgery are more likely if you smoke, especially if you keep smoking after surgery. **DON'T SMOKE!**

PLEASE WATCH FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS:

- PAIN that increases in intensity despite your pain medication and hand elevation.
- SWELLING that is significant and not relieved by elevating your hand.
- NUMBNESS or TINGLING in the fingers that was not present before surgery and persist after the numbing medicine has worn off
- Fingertips that turn BLUE or WHITE instead of the normal pink color.
- REDNESS and warmth in the finger/hand or redness spreading up the arm.
- If the cast or splint BREAKS or COMES OFF, especially in children.

If you should notice any of these problems, please contact Dr. Elzik's office at (949) 364-2154 during office hours (M-F, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM). At night or during the weekend, the number will automatically forward to the answering service.

Please call Dr. Elzik's office at **(949) 364-2154** to make a follow up appointment for wound and ROM assessment.