

**SOHAIL SHAYFER MD, INC**  
*Orthopedic Surgery, Hand Surgery, & Sports Medicine*  
Diplomate, American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery

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### **Post-op Hand and Wrist Instructions**

#### **Things to remember**

1. You should not operate a vehicle for the next 24 hours..
2. You should not engage in any activity involving machinery or appliances.
3. You should not drink alcoholic beverages during the next 48 hours or as long as you are using narcotic medication.
4. Avoid making any critical decisions or signing any legal documents.

#### **What to expect:**

It is normal to experience some pain in the operated body part as well as swelling in the entire hand and wrist. You may also experience some numbness in the fingers that can last up to approximately 8 hours, due to the specific local anesthetic that was used in your procedure.

Depending on your procedure you will find certain things very awkward. For example, ladies may find hooking a bra difficult; hook it in front, and then turn it around. Zippers might be challenging, but you will get there. Often it is your dominate hand that you have had surgery on. Try using your other hand the week before your surgery. With practice you will be successful. You may need someone to help cut your food, but you will be able to get the fork to your mouth, zip your trousers, and even apply make-up.

#### **Medications:**

A prescription drug (narcotic) for pain control, may have been prescribed. Take this as needed during the first day or so following your procedure. As your pain subsides, take less, or substitute Extra Strength Tylenol. Ultimately we want you off pain medication as soon as you are reasonably comfortable. Narcotic medication will cause constipation, therefore be certain to drink plenty of water. Eat fiber rich foods, and use an over the counter stool softener if your constipation is severe.

An anti-inflammatory or antibiotic may have also been prescribed. You must take these medications until you have finished all the medication, unless told otherwise.

#### **What to do:**

Keep your hand **elevated above your heart**. You want your hand to be between your heart and the ceiling as much as possible. Pamper yourself; lie down on your sofa so that the affected hand is closest to the back of the sofa. Put a pillow on the back of your sofa, and **apply an ice pack, for 20 minutes every two hours**. Frozen peas are ideal. This is just a little more flexible and melds to your wrist more easily. Simply refreeze the peas for the next application. Ice should be used for

the next **10 days**. **When using ice packs, or frozen peas, put a dishtowel between you and the ice.** Ice should not be applied directly to the skin.

When you are walking around keep your hand in the sling you have been given. When you sit or lay down, be certain to prop your hand on pillows so it stays elevated. By elevating your hand, and applying ice, you will decrease and minimize the swelling in your extremity, which will diminish your pain, and lessens the chances of stiffness and scar tissue formation.

Unless we have told you otherwise, put your elbow, shoulder and neck through a full range of motion to prevent stiffness in these joints. You should do this at least three times each day.

Exercise your fingers by doing the following. We want you to do 20 repetitions 5 times each day.

1. Straighten all your fingers
2. Claw your fingers
3. Put your fingers into an L shape
4. Make a fist

## **Bathing**

You may shower or tub the day following your procedure. Keep your dressing clean and dry. When taking a shower or bath, wrap a towel proximal to the dressing. First, cover your hand, covered by the towel, into the trash bag, and put a rubber band about 2 inches above the dressing. Then take the trash bag back over the dressing and put a rubber band at BOTH ENDS of the covering. Your wound will remain dry. Of course you should avoid putting your arm into the tub or directly under the shower flow.

**Make an appointment** to be seen in the office in 10-12 days for the suture removal unless we have instructed you differently. 818.981.3688

## **Discharge Information**

If you have problems relating to your surgery or develop any of the following: fever over 101, chills, heavy bleeding, inability to urinate after adequate fluid intake or any unusual occurrence, call Dr. Shayfer at 818.981.3688 or call Specialty Surgical Center ("SSC"), Monday through Friday between 7:00 am and 4:00 pm. If you are unable to reach the office or SSC you should go to the nearest Emergency Room. For extreme emergencies, dial 911.

Now relax, take good care of yourself, eat, drink fluids and we will see you in the office in about 10-12 days. Now relax, take good care of yourself, eat, drink fluids and we will see you in the office in about 10-12 days