



## POST –OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS- Hand/Wrist

Your Surgeon: Tyler R. Krummenacher, MD

Your Surgery: \_\_\_\_\_

Your follow-up appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

### Dressings:

- Your hand will be bandaged and /or splinted following your surgery:
  - Please remove this dressing 7 days after surgery and replace with a Band-Aid.  
You can begin showering at this point without the dressing.  
Please do not immerse your hand in water such as in a bath
  - Leave your dressing in place until your follow up visit.
- Please keep your dressing clean and dry at all times. You may shower tomorrow with your arm elevated above your head and dressing covered with a plastic bag, sealed with tape to make water tight. A plastic trash bag works well, or a commercial cast–protective bag can be purchased at most drug stores.
- If a cast has been applied to your arm, do not make holes in it or stick objects down it to scratch. To reduce irritation under the cast, you can blow cool air from a fan or hair drying under cast.

### Diet:

- You will be started on clear liquids following surgery. Once you tolerate clear liquids, your diet may be progressed to your normal diet as tolerated. Do not try to eat too much too soon. This may result in nausea due to the narcotic pain medication and anesthesia. If you fell nauseated, try clear liquids and crackers only.
- Cigarette smoking (even just one or two) can affect your healing and rate of complications. We strongly recommend that you do not smoke for one month after your surgery.
- Do not drink any alcohol (beer, wine, or spirits) for one week after surgery or while taking narcotic pain medicines.

### Medications:

- Pain medicine should be taken only “as needed” per your doctor’s instructions to help control your pain. Initially, you may take the pills on regular 4 to 6 hour intervals without missing any doses. However, as your pain improves, you will be able to decrease the frequency and amount.
- If a regional nerve block has been used for your anesthesia, it is common to experience numbness and tingling in the arm for twelve hours or longer after surgery. In order to get “in-front of” the pain, take your narcotic pain medicine as soon as you start to feel the nerve block wear off.
- You need to be as comfortable as possible, but also understand that no amount of pain medication, ice, elevation, and rest will completely eliminate pain after surgery. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory over the counter medicines (Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Naprosyn, etc.) may be used to supplement your prescription narcotic pain medication. **Because the pain prescription you were given contains acetaminophen (Tylenol), you should not take Tylenol or any medication containing acetaminophen while you are taking the pain prescription.**

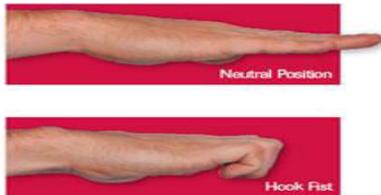
- Occasionally pain medicines may cause nausea if taken on an empty stomach. Narcotic pain medicines can also cause drowsiness, lightheadedness, itching and constipation. Over the counter stool softeners and increased fluid intake can help relieve constipation.
- Unless otherwise specified, you can resume taking all of the medicines you were taking routinely prior to surgery.

**Activities:**

- Keep hand/wrist about the level of your heart at all times for the next 7 days. This can be accomplished by using the foam pillow provided or other firm pillows. A sling will not hold your hand/wrist above your heart and therefore is inadequate (it also may cause shoulder stiffness).
- Use your hand as much as possible within the limits of your dressing and splint to decrease swelling and improve your overall surgical results UNLESS tendon or nerve repair was performed.
- Move all joints of the extremity that are not immobilized (shoulder, elbow, fingers, thumb) to minimize stiffness. Hand exercises can be performed a few times daily unless otherwise specified.
- Avoid all activities which may re-injure your hand or finger such as lifting objects heavier than a book, or rigorous physical activity.
- You should not drive a car with your hand/arm in a splint or while taking narcotic pain medicines.

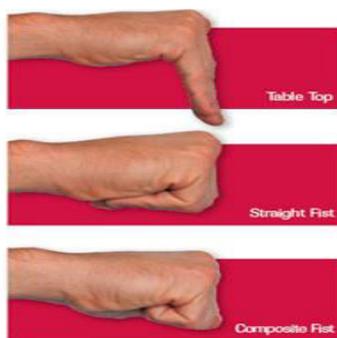
**Hand Exercises**

If your fingers have been left free in your postoperative dressing the following exercises can be helpful.



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**When to contact your doctor:**

- ✓ If you have a persistent temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- ✓ If you develop any signs of wound infection- Increasing redness, swelling, pus-like drainage
- ✓ If you have uncontrollable nausea/vomiting post operatively
- ✓ If your fingers appear blue or cold
- ✓ If you have persistent bleeding through your dressing
- ✓ If you have progressively increased numbness or pain
- ✓ If your dressing feels too tight and painful

Specimen(s) were sent to the lab for evaluation. Follow up with your physician for results.  N/A

**Written postoperative instructions received and understood.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Patient/Parent/Conservator/Guardian      Date/ Time

**Written postoperative instructions discussed with patient/responsible adult, who have no questions at this time.**

\_\_\_\_\_       Medical Equipment Instruction       N/A  
RN Signature      Date/ Time      (List) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Signature      Date/ Time       COPY TO PATIENT