



JOHN C. BERSCHBACK, MD
Hand & Microvascular Surgery

1200 N 10TH ST. W. STE A
ALTOONA WI 54720
TEL 715.832.1400

757 LAKELAND DR. STE B
CHIPPEWA FALLS WI 54729
TEL 715.723.8514

TRIGGER FINGER POST-SURGICAL FAQ'S

- **When do I see Dr. Berschback after surgery?**

You will return to see Dr. Berschback for your post-op visit about 10-14 days after surgery.

- **When can I use my hand?**

You will be able to begin using your hands for light activities usually the night of surgery. You will have a soft bandage on the hand that leaves your fingers and wrist free to move. You can perform simple functions such as feeding yourself, brushing your teeth, carrying a cup of coffee, etc. and continue to increase those as tolerated.

- **Are there any exercises that I should do?**

It is important to maintain motion of the finger that you just had surgery on to prevent scarring around the tendons that were released during the procedure. The best way to do this is to make a tight fist with all of your fingers, then straighten the fingers out making sure that all of the joints get as straight as you can make them. You should do this for 5-10 repetitions, 1-2 times an hour if possible. Please do your best to flex them into a fist, and then make sure to straighten them with each repetition. Maintain these exercises until you have regained more comfortable use of the hand or until your follow up visit.

- **Why is my finger numb?**

The local anesthetic that is used during the procedure often leaves the operative finger(s) and adjacent fingers numb for many hours. This may last well into the night of your surgery. The numbness from the anesthetic usually wears off by the following morning, but it may last a little longer.

- **How do I care for my dressings?**

You will have a soft bandage (not containing any hard cast material) after surgery. This should not get wet. You will be able to remove this on your own 2 days after surgery. At that time you can cover the incision site with a band aid to keep it clean.

- **When may I shower or bathe?**

You may begin to shower or bathe as soon as you like. If the original surgical dressing is still on, take care not to get it wet. Please remove your soft dressing 2 days after surgery. You may wash your incision in the shower, however, do not submerge the incision underwater for an extended period of time, such as in a pool or hot tub.

- **When do the stitches come out?**

Stitches will be removed at your post-op visit 10-14 days after surgery.

- **What if my pain medication causes itching or nausea?**

It is not uncommon for narcotic pain medications to cause these two side effects. If you experience itching you may take Claritin or Benadryl to help with this. Try to take medications like Advil or Aleve instead of narcotic pain medication if you can tolerate the discomfort. Remember to take your pain medication with food to diminish the potential for an upset stomach/potential nausea.

- **What about swelling?**

Swelling is quite common following these procedures. Do your best to keep the hand elevated above the level of your heart. Moving the fingers to open and close into a tight fist is also encouraged. Taking ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) will help with swelling (note: do NOT take acetaminophen/ Tylenol in addition to your narcotic pain medication because the narcotic pain medication also has Tylenol in it. You may take 1 or the other, but not both).

- **When may I drive?**

You may begin driving again when you feel comfortable behind the wheel AND you are no longer taking any of the narcotic pain medications. If you would feel comfortable driving next to yourself on the road, it is probably safe for you return to this activity.

- **When can I go back to work?**

It depends on the type of work you do. Those with jobs that are more sedentary and do not require heavy loads are often able to start returning to their duties immediately after surgery. Jobs that involve extensive heaving lifting and strain on the hands may take 3-4 weeks before they are able to return to work functions more normally. This is something quite unique to every patient's situation and can be discussed more specifically with Dr. Berschback at your office visit.