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Hand & Microvascular Surgery

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GANGLION and MUCOUS CYSTS

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 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.

- **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. Two days after surgery, please remove your soft dressing. 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?**

Dr. Berschback sometimes uses dissolvable stitches that are under the skin and do not require to be removal. If you have external stitches, they 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 pain medications to cause these two side effects. If you experience itching you may take Claritin or Benadryl to help with this. Remember to take your pain medication with food. You should try to take anti-inflammatory medication first (such as Aleve, Advil, Motrin, etc.), and then take the narcotic pain medication if you are still having pain.

- **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 on the hands are sometimes able to start returning to their duties within 2-3 days. Jobs that involve extensive heavy 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.