
Post-op Instructions for Wrist Debridement

These instructions are to compliment the information given to you by your surgeon, the nursing staff or other health care professionals. They cover many of the common questions.

Wound Care

- Immediately after surgery, a bulky dressing will be placed on your hand and wrist. Your dressing should be kept clean and dry. The dressing can be removed 3 days after surgery, and the hand lightly cleaned with soap and water. The incision should NOT be soaked in water, such as in a bathtub, or vigorously rubbed to clean. You may dry the incision by patting it lightly with a clean, dry towel. A new, clean dressing should then be applied over the incision, such as a band aid or gauze. Dressings should be changed daily and as needed for any bleeding or drainage. Keep the incision clean and covered until seen back for your first follow up.
- When showering, it is recommended that a waterproof, occlusive dressing be placed over top of the incision area, for the first days. You may also use a plastic bag or saran wrap secured with tape over the area.
- The incision should be inspected daily and any abnormal drainage or excessive bleeding should be reported immediately.
- Your sutures will be removed at your clinic visit with Dr. McCarthy approximately 7-10 days after surgery.

Pain/Swelling

- Elevate your hand to decrease swelling and discomfort. Mild to moderate swelling is expected after surgery. Your hand should be elevated above the level of your heart for best results.
- Narcotic pain medication may be prescribed for use, if needed, after you leave the hospital in limited amounts. Try to wean down/off as soon as you are able. Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or anti-inflammatories (Ibuprofen or Aleve) as main medications for pain control as/if appropriate. Add the narcotic medication for additional pain control if needed. It can help to stagger your pain medications. If a refill of medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In general, refills will not be made after hours or on weekends as they need to be picked up. Please plan ahead.
- Also narcotic medications can cause constipation so you may want/need to use an over the counter stool softeners/laxatives as needed.
- Ice may be applied to the surgical area to help with pain and swelling. Avoid direct contact with the skin, as this may result in damage to the skin. Instead, wrap an ice pack or bag of ice in a towel before placing on the hand. You may ice your finger as often as you prefer, but allow 20-30 minutes between ice applications.

Driving

- To drive you must no longer be taking narcotic pain pills. Also, you must feel strong and alert and able to grip the steering wheel with both hands.

Exercises/Activity

- It is important to begin finger exercises after surgery to avoid stiffness. Exercises should be done throughout the day, and are especially important during the first 4 weeks after surgery. Do the exercises 3-4 times a day, for 5-10 repetitions each. Exercises include opening and closing the hand, bringing thumb to each fingertip, and finger exercises (isolate the tip of the affected finger and bend and straighten the tip). Heavy lifting or strenuous activity should be avoided until permitted by Dr. McCarthy. Hand therapy may be recommended for you following surgery.

- Scar massage may be performed over your incision once sutures are removed.

Follow-up

- You will see Dr. McCarthy in the office 7-10 days after surgery.

Questions/Concerns

- If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to call our office, Monday-Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

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