
After handsurgery

This instruction is meant to be printed out. It includes gaps to be filled in.

This instruction is meant to guide you in your rehabilitation after surgery. Good aftercare after surgery is important in preventing complications and to speed up your recovery.

Wound care

- The thick bandage around the surgical site is meant to prevent swelling and diminish bleeding. Cover the bandage with plastic (eg. a plastic bag) when taking a shower.
- Change the bandage: _____ at home. If you can't change the bandage at home make an appointment to have it changed at your own health-care center/ occupational health clinic.
- If you remove the bandages yourself, remove all bandages. After this you can carefully irrigate the wound with tepid tap water and dry it. Cover the wound with a thinner bandage.
- If the bandage gets wet or dirty change it. Wash your hands before and after you take care of the wound.
- The stiches should be removed: _____ by a nurse at your health-care center/ occupational health clinic. Make an appointment yourself.
- Don't go swimming, bathing or to the sauna before the stiches have been removed and wait at least 24 hours after removal.

Treating pain and relieving swelling

The most important treatment for the first week after surgery is keeping your hand elevated (at heart-level). Keeping the hand elevated prevents the build-up of fluids in the hand thus relieving pain and enabling tissues to heal. You can use a sling/ mitella for the first day after surgery, but after that you should use your own muscle strength to hold your arm up. At night you can place two pillows under your hand to keep it elevated.

Pain and swelling are the symptoms of an inflammatory reaction in your hand caused by surgery, which is perfectly normal. Pain caused by surgery usually subsides within 3-4 days after the operation. Your attending doctor plans the appropriate treatment of pain. You can also try putting cold on your hand to alleviate pain. Follow the instructions given to you.

Rehabilitation

Your attending doctor and occupational therapist will give you more detailed instructions on moving your hand/fingers. Joints (shoulder, elbow, wrist, fingers) that are not confined by the bandage should be moved right after the local anesthesia has subsided.

Contact the hospital if

- You suspect infection on the surgical site (redness or increased warmth of the surgical site, swelling, pain, increased bleeding/secretion of pus).
- Pain increases despite of taking pain medication and holding the hand elevated.
- The bandage feels too tight or gets wet/dirty.
- You get a fever after the surgery (over 38 degrees).