

After Hand Surgery

My surgery is called: _____

Pain

- It is common to have pain after surgery. You may be given a prescription for pain medication. If you still have pain while taking prescription pain medications, you may also take:
 - › Extra strength acetaminophen (Tylenol® Extra Strength)
 - or
 - › Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®)
- Follow the instructions on the package.
- **Do not** drink alcohol while taking pain medications.
- **Keep your hand raised up above the level of your heart for at least 72 hours (3 days) after surgery.** This will help lower your swelling. This can also help your pain.
- ☐ **Do not** try to move your fingers in the splint. Try to keep them totally relaxed. Moving your fingers may tear the repair that has been done before it can heal.
- ☐ You may move your fingers in the splint only if you feel comfortable.

How do I care for my splint?

- **Keep your splint dry.** It will fall apart if it gets wet.
- **Do not** shower. You may take a bath with your hand out of the water.
 - › If you do shower, cover your dressing with a garbage bag. Keep the garbage bag in place with rubber bands.
- Your splint may get soft. If this happens, it should be replaced. Call the Plastic Surgery Clinic and ask for the next available appointment:
 - › Phone: 902-473-7518
 - or
 - › Call your surgeon's office.
- **Do not** remove your splint until you talk to your surgeon.

Dressing

- ☐ Leave the dressing on until your follow-up appointment with your surgeon.
- ☐ Remove the dressing after _____ days.

Stitches

- Your stitches can be removed after _____ days:
 - ☐ by your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) or at a walk-in clinic.
 - ☐ by your surgeon.
- You may have Steri-Strips™ (strong pieces of tape) over your incision (cut). They will fall off on their own about 7 to 10 days after your surgery.
- You may cover your Steri-Strips™ with a Band-Aid® so that your incision does not rub on your clothes.

If you have bleeding through your dressing:

- › Apply firm pressure on your incision for 10 to 15 minutes.
- › Raise your hand up above the level of your heart.
- **If the bleeding does not stop after 15 minutes, call your surgeon's office. If you cannot reach them or you have severe (very bad) bleeding, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away. Do not drive yourself.**

Call your surgeon's office or your primary health care provider if you have any of these symptoms:

- › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
- › Chills
- › Drainage from your incision that smells bad or is not clear
- › Redness around the incision
- › Pain that is not going away or is getting worse, even when taking your pain medications as prescribed
- › Numbness, tingling, or a "pins and needles" feeling in your hand or arm
- › Unusual colour (like white, blue, or purple) in the fingers of your operated hand
- **If you cannot reach them, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away. Do not drive yourself.**

Follow-up appointment

Doctor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Location: Plastic Surgery Clinic, 4th floor, Halifax Infirmary (Summer Street entrance)
› **Phone:** 902-473-7518

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