



OHIO PLASTIC SURGERY SPECIALISTS

WALTER L. BERNACKI, MD • CHRISTOPHER G. ZOCHOWSKI, MD

Board Certified Plastic Surgeons

Post-Operative Instructions for Hand Surgery

Diet

If Local Anesthetic Only: You have no dietary restrictions.

If Sedation Was Given: Start your diet with clear liquids or a light soup. Most people can resume a normal diet the day after surgery. Advance your diet as tolerated to your regular diet over the next 24 hours.

You may experience some constipation as a result of the pain medication. Over the counter laxatives such as Milk of Magnesia or a stool softener are recommended. If this is not sufficient, then dulcolax or a glycerin suppository may be necessary. These can be purchased over the counter at the pharmacy.

Activity

On the day of surgery and for 2 days after, please avoid exertion, straining, bending or lifting. I encourage you to be modestly active after the first few postoperative days. Walking is perfect. **Very limited use** of the operated hand is acceptable. Avoid exercise until we discuss it at your first post op visit.

Elevate the hand to help reduce swelling and pain. The hand should be held at a level above your heart. When sleeping, prop the hand up on pillows.

You may apply ice packs to the operative site through the dressings. **Do not remove the dressing or splints unless specified otherwise.**

Wound Care

Keep the dressing and splint **dry and intact unless instructed to do otherwise.**

You may notice some numbness in the fingers after surgery that may last anywhere from several hours to days. This is quite normal and is often from the local anesthesia we use in the operating room.

Bathing

It is fine to bathe when you feel well as long as you keep the dressings and splints dry. The splint and dressings can be covered with a plastic bag and a rubber band to ensure that water does not soak the dressings.

Pain Control

Take the narcotic pain medicine as needed. In one or two days you will probably be able to substitute Tylenol every 6-8 hours as needed. (**Do not** take the Tylenol with the Percocet, both have acetaminophen). Please do not drive until you are no longer taking the narcotic and are free of significant pain.

Emergencies

If there is a problem, please call the office 614.682.5095. The answering machine will lead you to the on call surgeon's pager. Most issues are easily addressed and do not require significant intervention.

The most common emergencies that might need attention are:

- Sudden increase in pain
- Nausea that lasts 4 hours or more and does not respond to medication
- Bleeding that is profuse and uncontrolled
- High fever lasting more than a few hours and not responding to medication
- Shortness of breath or chest pain
- Leg swelling
- Loss of consciousness

If you feel the situation is urgent, call 911 and/or proceed directly to the closest emergency room. Please call us as well.

Follow-Up

Follow-up is typically in about 12-14 days and should be scheduled by calling the office at 614.682.5095 if it has not already been arranged.