

Post-Operative Instructions

Someone from Dr. Hunt's office will call you the day after surgery to check on you. If you are unsure of your postoperative appointment please clarify it when they call you.

DRESSING:

You will have a bandage or dressing over the operative site. Unless specific instructions have been given, you are to leave the dressing on, do not change it, until your first postoperative appointment. Some dressings include casting material to help immobilize the extremity.

DO NOT GET YOUR DRESSING WET!

The bandages are placed in a sterile and specific fashion to protect the operative area. Once at home, if you feel your dressing is too tight, comes off, or accidentally gets wet, please contact Dr. Hunt's office at 713-986-5530.

ACTIVITY:

For the first 72 hours at least, elevate the operated extremity above the level of your heart to help avoid post-operative swelling and accompanying pain. While resting, place your hand/arm on several pillows, or while sitting at a table, rest your elbow on the table with your hand pointed to the sky. Try to balance your activity, allowing time for rest. If a sling is provided it is primarily until you regain strength after anesthesia or for occasional comfort while up and about. The sling does not allow for proper elevation and tends to cause stiffness in your elbow/shoulder if worn excessively. We encourage you to also move any fingers that are not immobilized all the way straight and into a full fist to help minimize finger swelling and stiffness. Do not squeeze anything, just a gentle pumping motion to push the fluid out of your fingers.

PAIN:

If you receive an anesthetic block your hand or arm may be numb for several hours. You should make sure to pick up your pain medications before your surgery. Rest and elevation is still one of the most important factors for pain control. Take your pain medication only as needed, but do not wait for the pain to become out of control. The most severe pain occurs as the block wears off. Even if you are not having pain but feel the hand "waking up", take your pain medicine so that it will be working when needed.

Pain medication may cause some lethargy, nausea, and or constipation. If these or other symptoms become significantly problematic please contact Dr. Hunt's office and discontinue the medication. Multimodal pain management is utilized so that you do not become dependent on narcotics. Make certain you understand which pain medications to take and when.

FOLLOW UP:

You will be seen approximately one to two weeks after surgery depending on the procedure. Check your discharge sheet for specifics. If you are still uncertain, call Dr. Hunt's office. Stitches will usually remain in for 7-14 days. Pins may remain in for six weeks or more depending on the procedure. Pin care instructions will be given at your first post-operative visit if required. Your recovery may require additional appointments with an Occupational Therapist (OT). Your first post-op clinic and therapy visit will be made prior to surgery and further appointments can be made through our appointment office.