



After Your De Quervain's Release Surgery

Self-care and follow-up

Dressing and Wound Care

- After surgery, you will be in a bulky dressing with a splint that supports your thumb and wrist. The splint helps protect the incision site and lessens swelling. **It will stay on until your follow-up visit with your Doctor 10-14 days after surgery.**
- When showering or bathing, cover the splint and your hand with a plastic bag to keep everything dry
- Elevate your hand above your heart as much as possible to lessen swelling and pain. Pillows and blankets under the arm are helpful when you go to sleep.



If your incision is red or there is drainage coming from it during daytime hours, call us right away at (206) 598-4263 (HAND). After office hours, you can call the hospital operator at (206) 598-6190 and ask for the Hand Fellow on-call. Go to the emergency room or urgent care if this happens at night or on the weekend.

Surgical incision shown on the left (2-3 cm in length)

Pain Management

- You will receive a prescription for narcotic pain medicine. Take the medicine only if you need it. If your pain is mild, you make take Tylenol (acetaminophen) instead.
- Be sure to talk with the clinic nurse about how to take your pain medication. Taking the correct dose at the right time is very important.
- If you have uncomfortable side effects from the pain medicine, please call the nurse at (206) 598-4263 (HAND).

Driving

- Do not drive if you are taking narcotic pain medication. It is not safe. The medicine can make you sleepy and delay your reaction
- Once you are no longer taking the medicine, you may drive as soon as you can comfortably grip the steering wheel with both hands.

Activity

- You can use your hand for activities of daily living, such as eating, writing, typing, getting dressed, brushing teeth, combing your hair, preparing food, and other light activities.
- Do not lift anything heavier than a cup of coffee or full soda can (about 1-2 lbs) until sutures have been removed.
- Avoid heavy lifting more than 10 lbs (gallon of milk) such as weight-lifting or carrying groceries, until 4 weeks after surgery.

Follow-Up Plan

- When you leave the surgery center, you should have a **follow-up** appointment with Roosevelt Hand Therapy (Seattle) or Eastside Specialty Clinic (Bellevue) already set for **10-14 days**. At this visit:
- We will remove the post-operative splint and lace you into a removable splint as needed for support and comfort
- Your sutures will be removed.
- Dr. Huang will see you during your therapy visit
- The Hand Therapist will assess your progress. The Therapist will also teach you exercises to lessen the scarring around the incision and increase your hand's strength and range of motion
- Wear the splint for heavier activities for about 2-3 more weeks after suture removal. You can increase activities as tolerated but avoid heavy repetitive activities for 4 weeks after surgery.

Results

- Most patients who have DeQuervain's release regain full use of their hand, with full motion and return of strength within about 4-6 weeks after their surgery.

For more information, please visit our website at WWW.UWHAND.COM