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