

DR. ZIV VALLEY HAND & ORTHOPAEDIC
Hand/ Wrist/ Elbow Postoperative Program- **PLEASE READ !**

- Keep the hand elevated above the level of your heart (at shoulder level) as much as possible, especially for the first 48-72 hours. A sling is good while standing/ going out for 1 week. After a week the sling is not needed and it is best to use it as little as possible. If you are sitting, take the sling off and use pillows. Spending most of the first 24 hours on the couch with the hand somewhat elevated at shoulder level is good. Sleep normally, don't worry about elevating the hand during sleep.
- An ice pack placed on the surgical area for 20-30 minutes at a time 2 to 8 times a day likely will help reduce pain and swelling considerably during the first 48-72 hours.
- In most cases pain increases substantially several hours after surgery as the local anesthetic wears off - this is normal.
- Considerable swelling of the hand and fingers may be seen after even small procedures. This usually starts a few hours after surgery, and peaks on the first or second day after surgery. Ice and elevation will help reduce this.
- Moving the fingers frequently if possible helps the swelling and decreases stiffness, even if it is uncomfortable to move the fingers.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry. When showering or bathing cover the surgical bandage using a plastic bag secured with rubber bands.
- **For many procedures (carpal tunnel, trigger finger) you should remove all dressings and wash the incision with soap and water starting on the 5th to 7th day after surgery. Some bleeding at this point is not unusual. After that you can cover the incision with a band-aid but let it air out a few times a day, especially if at home/night leave open to air.**
- Surgery for fractures, ulnar nerve, Dupuytren's, thumb arthroplasty, tendon or nerve repair: do NOT change the dressing
- Take pain medicine as directed. If taking Vicodin, Norco, Percocet or other narcotic, do not take any extra Tylenol/acetaminophen.
- I strongly recommend taking Advil/ibuprofen 3 tablets 3 times a day or Aleve 2 tablets 2 times a day, with food, after surgery, unless you have an ulcer. This will decrease the pain further, help with swelling, and reduce the need for strong pain medication. Do not take this if you are also taking a prescription anti-inflammatory (Naprosyn, Lodine, Celebrex, Motrin, Voltaren, etc.) This is fine at the same time as the prescription pain medication.
- Numbness and tingling in the fingers is common in the first day or two and generally improves with time and elevation.
- Itching and nausea are often caused by narcotic pain medication and anesthesia. Benadryl can be helpful for itching. Nausea is short-term and does not require treatment.
- Intense exercise/workout should be avoided for the first 3 days; it can increase swelling and occasionally cause bleeding of the incision.
- Please contact us if you experience unexplained high fever, severe increase in pain, or red streaking of the operated arm.
- If the elastic (Ace) wrap feels too tight, you can carefully unwrap it and re-wrap it more loosely without disturbing the dressing underneath.
- The postop appointment was made when surgery was scheduled and is on your preop papers, call the office in a few days if you cannot find it, it is usually in 10-14 days

Call for any urgent questions:

Van Nuys 818-902-2800
Thousand Oaks 805-660-1650

