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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

DIP Joint Fusion

Activity

- Elevate the arm at all times to help reduce swelling and pain. Using several pillows, maintain the arm above chest level especially when sitting & sleeping at night.
- You may apply ice packs to your hand and wrist to help with pain and swelling as well (20-30 minutes four times per day).
- Wiggle your **non-affected** fingers regularly. Gently open and close your fist to maintain digital flexibility and motion. You may use your opposite hand to assist in these exercises.
- Please avoid high force/resistance grasping using your operative hand as well as lifting objects greater than one pound for a period of one month following surgery in order to prevent wound complications.
- You may develop bruising around your forearm and elbow. Do not be alarmed; this is normal following surgery. If you develop significant arm swelling, redness, or tenderness, you should contact our office promptly.

Dressings

- A large bulky compressive bandage/splint has been placed over your wrist & hand. This dressing is designed to minimize swelling in the operative extremity (and should feel “snug”).
- The splint is to be worn until your first post-operative visit. At that time you will be transitioned over to traditional thumb spica cast.
- If you are experiencing significant pain and feel that the bandage is too tight, you may gently loosen the operative dressing by unwrapping and rewrapping the outside ACE bandage at any given time. Please **do not** remove the underlying white fluffy gauze.
- Keep your dressing/splint clean and dry until your first follow-up visit. If you wish to shower, plastic bags, saran wrap, and waterproof dressings can all be used to keep the area dry.

Medication

- You have been prescribed the following **pain medication**:
 - Oxycodone – Please take 1 tab every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.
- As the pain gradually improves you may transition over to Extra-Strength Tylenol which is a strong non-narcotic alternative for pain.
- If you have any side effects (i.e. Nausea, rash, trouble breathing) from medication discontinue its use and call our office.

Follow Up

- You have likely already been scheduled for your first post-operative visit. If you have not received an appointment please contact the office to schedule an appointment 10-14 days after your surgery.
- You will be seen by Dr. Montgomery or his Physician Assistant for your first post-operative visit to review your intra-operative findings and to go over any questions you may have.
- Sutures will also be removed at that time.
- Call the office immediately if you develop a fever (>101.5), chills, excessive incision drainage, calf pain, chest pain, or shortness of breath.
- If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call the office.