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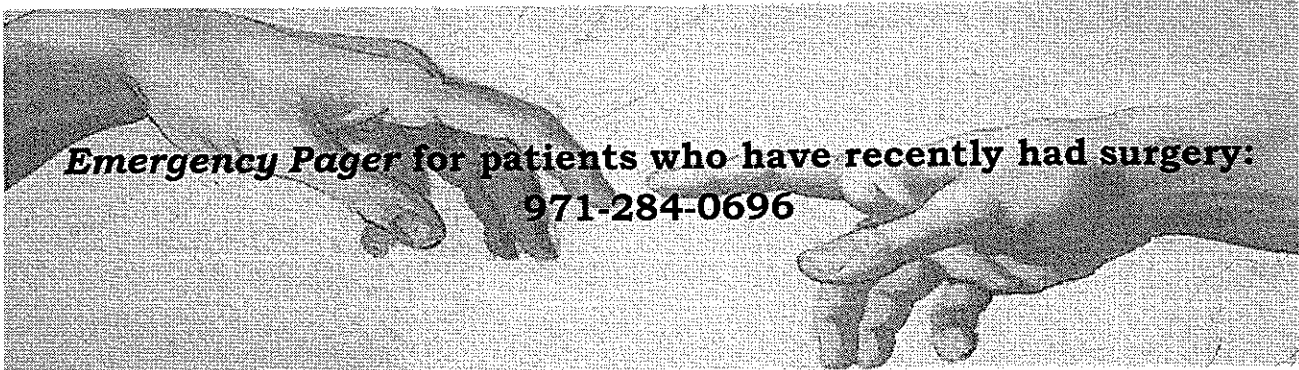
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HandSurgeryofOregon.com

Post Operative Instructions

- 1. ELEVATE** the hand above the elbow, and the elbow above the chest, for at least 48 hours. A marble should be able to run downhill from your fingertips to your chest without ever going back uphill. When walking or standing, the arm needs to be elevated above your head (not resting on your chest or in a sling). It takes 4 hours of elevation to decrease the swelling that occurs with only 4 minutes of the hand being down too low. Resting the wrist or forearm on the top of your head is a good way to keep it elevated when standing. Elevating your hand will decrease pain, decrease complication risks, increase finger motion and speed recovery after the operation.
- 2. PAIN MEDICATION** will not completely relieve pain in most cases during the first 48 hours. These first two days are always the most painful time period. Elevation and ice placed at the inside of the elbow will help decrease pain. You may alternate different medications to help relieve pain. For example, Percocet and Dilaudid may be alternated every two hours if needed. Take 1 or 2 Dilaudid tablets, then 1 to 2 Percocet tablets may be taken 2 hours after the Dilaudid. The Dilaudid tablets may then be taken 2 hours after the Percocet. This provides a 4-hour time period between the same medication, but 2 hours in between different medications. Ibuprofen may be alternated with a single narcotic like Norco.
- 3. NAUSEA** and perhaps vomiting can occur with almost all types of narcotic pain medication. If your stomach feels upset, do NOT try to eat, or drink a lot of liquids. It is best to eat only small amounts (such as 2 crackers) with the pain medication. Liquids should be taken in small sips every ten minutes instead of large gulps all at one time. If nausea persists, Emetrol can be purchased over the counter at a drugstore. This taken repeatedly for 5 or six times if it is vomited back up. If vomiting continues, call Dr. Wilson, who will call your pharmacy for a suppository to relieve vomiting. It is not a problem to go several days without eating. IT IS important to drink enough liquids to allow you to continue to urinate in adequate amounts.
- 4. SWELLING** in the hand and fingers always occurs after the operation. The swelling can be quite impressive. Discoloration with black and blue fingers (or even in the forearm) may occur. The most common cause is failure to elevate the hand adequately. There is NO cast on the forearm or hand. If the dressing feels to tight, the soft dressing may be loosened or even cut, then rewrapped.

5. **DRESSINGS** covering the operative site **MUST** be kept dry. Water can cause infection. When showering or bathing, a plastic bag should be placed around the hand and forearm, then sealed with tape. If some moisture or water dampens the dressing, a hair dryer may be used to dry it. If the entire dressing becomes completely soaked, the dressing should be removed, alcohol applied, and the office notified so a new one can be placed.
6. **NUMBNESS** in the fingers or thumb may persist for up to 48 hours or longer after the operation. This is usually a result of the medication injected during the operation in order to help relieve the pain after the operation, plus swelling. If the fingers are numb and severe pain is present which is not lessened by pain medication, Dr. Wilson should be notified.
7. **BLOOD** may soak through the dressing, and occasionally it may completely soak the dressing. A large amount of blood may appear to be present because the dressing acts like a sponge to remove blood from the hand and wrist. The bleeding will usually stop within 24 hours. If blood is dripping from the dressings, Dr. Wilson should be contacted.
8. **ALL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** should be minimized during the first week. Any exercise will increase the heart rate and the blood pressure causing more blood to go to the hand. This results in more swelling and pain. Sitting at a desk with the elbow on the desk and the hand elevated is satisfactory.
9. **FEVER** after a hand operation is rarely due to an infection in the hand. If you feel hot, please take your temperature with a thermometer. If your temperature is 101 degrees or higher, and you have no other symptoms such as cough or nasal congestion, please contact Dr. Wilson.
10. **REFILLS** on medications are usually written on the prescription bottle and may be obtained by calling your pharmacy. If you have no more refills available, please plan ahead and call the office during normal business hours for refill requests. Medication refills will not be available on evenings and weekends. Some medications such as Demerol, Percocet, and Norco cannot be called into a pharmacy: these medications must have a new prescription written by Dr. Wilson at his office.
11. For a true medical **EMERGENCY** after business hours, Dr. Wilson may be contacted on his emergency pager. During normal business hours, please call the office. Please do not contact Northbank Surgery Center for postoperative questions.

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**Emergency Pager for patients who have recently had surgery:
971-284-0696**