SURGICAL SERVICES

Post-Operative Instructions

Hand and Wrist Surgery

PAIN:

Some pain after surgery is expected for 2 - 3 days. Take your pain medication   
as instructed. Tylenol™ and/or Advil™ may be all you require for pain. If you feel nauseated, you may take an “over the counter” Gravol™ for the nausea.

# OPERATIVE SITE:

You can expect a dressing and/or cast on your hand/wrist. This is designed to hold your hand/wrist in a position for comfort and healing. To help reduce swelling/pain, keep your hand elevated above the level of your heart for several days. When lying   
or sitting, keep your hand on 2 – 3 pillows. You are encouraged to move your fingers to prevent stiffness and increase circulation. When standing, hold your hand at shoulder level. Do not get the dressing wet as it may contain plaster and must be protected. Leave dressing on until your follow up appointment. Your incision may ooze blood for up to 48 hours after your surgery. Do not change the dressing; reinforce the dressing as needed with gauze. Do not attempt to revise or remove the dressing yourself unless advised by your surgeon. When showering etc., insert the dressing into a large plastic bag and seal with an elastic band above dressing on forearm.

# ACTIVITY:

Resume your normal activities as tolerated or as advised by your surgeon.

**Driving** – You may resume driving when you have full control of your hand/wrist   
and are pain free or requiring minimal pain medication such as Tylenol and/or Advil. You cannot drive when taking narcotics for pain. Please contact your automobile insurance provider to verify your policy and ensure insurance coverage is appropriate.

**Sports** – resume when advised by your surgeon.

# DIET:

Fluids to light diet as tolerated the day of surgery. The next day resume your normal diet as tolerated. Constipation may be a side effect of your pain pills. Increase the   
fiber in your diet and drink plenty of fluids to help prevent constipation. Good sources

CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE 🡪

Information is available in alternate formats upon request

of fiber are fruits, vegetables and whole grain breads and cereals (All Bran™, Bran Flakes, Shreddies™ and Shredded Wheat). You may also purchase a mild laxative   
if needed, speak with your community pharmacist.

FOLLOW UP:

Your surgeon will advise you when to return for follow up, either at his/her office or clinic. If you are a Day Surgery patient, a nurse will call you the day after to talk about any concerns you may have.

If you have any problems or concerns, contact your surgeon or the surgeon on-call through his/her office. If unable to reach either, contact the hospital Call Centre at (613)721-2000 and ask for the surgeon on-call for Plastics or Orthopedics.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

If you have had a local anesthetic be careful not to injure your hand/wrist, as you may not have full sensation for several hours.

If you have a cast you will be given a “Cast Care Instruction Sheet”.

DO NOT TAKE ANY MEDICATION CONTAINING ASPIRIN UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY YOUR SURGEON.

**Call your surgeon immediately or go to the nearest Emergency Department   
if you have any of the following:**

* Persistent numbness or tingling in the fingertips or finger is cold and blue. *(This may indicate your dressing is TOO TIGHT)* despite elevating your hand for 1 hour.
* Severe pain not relieved with your pain medication or severe pain that keeps you awake at night OR awakens you from your sleep.
* Signs and symptoms of infection – wound red hot and swollen, yellow/green or   
  foul-smelling discharge.
* Elevated temperature (38ºC or 100.4ºF) and/or chills lasting more than 24 hours.

The information contained on this sheet is provided to you and your family to   
help you in your recovery from this procedure. This document is not intended to replace medical advice from your doctor or healthcare team. If you require more specific/additional medical advice, contact your doctor and healthcare team about   
your particular healthcare needs.

Protect yourself! Clean your hands frequently using soap and water or

hand sanitizer and ask that your healthcare providers and visitors do the same."   
Clean hands save lives.