






## Post-Operative Instructions


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1. **Elevation** – keeping your hand above the level of your heart helps reduce swelling and pain. The first couple of days after surgery are when this is most important. At night, placing your arm on a pillow next to your head helps as well. The elevation also reminds you to exercise your shoulder, avoiding stiffness. You should continue with the elevation as long as you notice it helps in reducing pain.
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2. **Dressings/splints** – leave the surgical dressing in place unless otherwise instructed. The dressing protects the surgical incision, prevents infection, and positions your hand/wrist or elbow in a specific position unique to the surgical procedure. Showering with the bandage in place is done with a plastic bag placed over it (secured with tape) or with Press-n-Seal.
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3. **Care for the surgical incision** - once the dressings are removed, it is OK to clean the wound with soap and water. Hydrogen peroxide is effective in removing any blood around the incision. Keep the incision(s) clean and dry. Do not soak the hand in water. Do not use any ointments or creams. Oozing from the incision can be normal and is nothing to be alarmed about. This is your body's way of healing. Once it is dry, it is OK to leave it open to the air, but you might want to continue with the dressings for protection.
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4. **Pain management** – you will be given a prescription for pain medicine. This should be used only if needed for the first few days. It is alright to take the following over the counter medicines in addition to the prescription. Advil or Motrin (ibuprofen) 400 – 800 mg three times a day, or Alleve (naproxen) 200-400 twice a day. It is alright to take the Advil or Alleve (only one of these) in addition to the pain medication prescribed. Avoid Tylenol if you are taking the pain prescription because it usually has Tylenol combined with the narcotic. You can take plain Tylenol if you are not taking the narcotic pain prescription.
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5. **Nausea** – if you experience nausea with the pain medication please call my office and we can prescribe medication for that. Once you are taking only Tylenol or Advil/Alleve the nausea usually goes away.
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6. **Follow up** – you have been given an appointment for your first follow up visit. If you have any questions or problems before then, please contact my office and ask to speak to Debbie or Yen at 804- 320-1339.