

Wrist Fracture or Arthrodesis

Post-Operative Instructions/Information after Wrist Fracture or Arthrodesis Procedure

What to Expect:

The local anesthetic may make areas of your hand feel numb for 8-12 hours.

You will have a moderate amount of pain for the first 3-4 days; this should be adequately addressed by the oral narcotic pain medication that was prescribed when you left the day surgery suite: such as Oxycodone or Vicodin. The usual dose of an anti-inflammatory such as Advil is recommended at the same time you are taking the pain medication (unless you have a history of ulcers).

It is common to experience swelling after the surgery, especially in your fingers. Measures that are helpful include elevating the hand above your heart on a few pillows, and draping a plastic bag filled with crushed ice over your fingers, splint and dressing. Place a dish towel or small hand towel over your hand and arm first so the dressing doesn't get wet.

You may loosen your outside ace wrap if the dressing feels excessively tight.

Other Suggestions:

To keep your hand from throbbing it can be helpful to elevate your hand above your heart. When lying on your back if you place your hand on a pillow you can put your hand inside the pillow case so that your hand will not fall off of the pillow.

Put a plastic bag over your forearm and hand when showering (keep dressing dry).

If you experience any worrisome symptoms such as a fever higher than 101.5 degrees or markedly increased pain, contact the office during normal office hours. If it is after business hours and you need to reach the doctor on-call you may call our main number:(503)214-5200 and this will put you in contact with the doctor on-call.

Activity Level:

Leave the post-operative dressing on until you return to the office for dressing removal and placing of a cast or brace, which will be approximately 9-14 days after your surgery. You can begin gentle range of motion exercises with your fingers only. This should consist of lightly flexing and extending your fingers. You may use your hand for light activities such as eating, dressing, typing, etc.

Follow-up:

Schedule a post-operative appointment for 9-14 days after the surgery. The phone number for our appointment desk is: (503)214-5255. At this visit your post-operative dressing will be removed. Your sutures will also be removed at this time. A cast may be applied at this visit, or if the internal fixation allows for early motion, a removable splint may be applied.