

# After Hand Surgery

My surgery is called: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pain

You may be given a prescription for pain pills. You can also try Tylenol® Extra Strength or an anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen, Advil®, Motrin®).

**Do not drink alcohol while taking pain pills.**

## Activity

- Keep your hand elevated (raised up) above the level of your heart. Do this for at least 48 hours after surgery. This will lower the amount of swelling and should lessen your pain.
- Keep your splint dry. If it gets wet, it will fall apart. A tub bath with your hand out of the water is safer than a shower. If you do shower, cover the dressing with a garbage bag held on with rubber bands.
  - If your splint gets soft, it should be replaced. If this happens, call the Plastic Surgery Clinic at 902-473-7518 and ask for the next available appointment, or call your surgeon's office.
- Do not remove your splint until you talk about it with your surgeon.
- Do not try to move your fingers that are in the splint. Try to keep them totally relaxed. Moving your fingers may tear the repair that has been done before it can heal.
- You may move your fingers in the splint as you feel comfortable to do so.

## Dressing

- Leave in place until your next doctor's visit.
- Remove after \_\_\_\_\_ days, and leave dressing off.

## Stitches

Your stitches can be removed after \_\_\_\_\_ days:

- By your family doctor or at a walk-in clinic.
- By your surgeon.

If you have Steri-Strips™ (thin strips of tape) over your incision (cut), they should stay in place for 7-10 days. You may cover them with a Band-Aid® so your incision doesn't rub on your clothing if you find this more comfortable. Steri-Strips™ will fall off on their own.

## Things to watch for

### Bleeding:

- › apply firm pressure for 10-15 minutes
- › raise your hand up above the level of your heart

**Contact your surgeon's office if bleeding continues. If you have severe bleeding, go to the nearest Emergency Department.**

### Signs of possible infection:

- › fever or chills
- › drainage from the incision that smells bad or is not clear
- › redness around the incision
- › pain that gets worse over time

### Signs of blood flow problems:

- › numbness, tingling, or "pins and needles" feeling in hand/arm
- › unusual colour (such as white, blue, or purple) in fingers of operated hand
- › pain not helped by medication

**If you are worried that you may have an infection, blood flow problems, or another urgent problem, follow these steps until you are able to get help:**

1. Call your surgeon's office during regular hours.

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

2. See your family doctor.

3. Call 811 to talk to a registered nurse 24/7.

4. Go to the nearest Emergency Department.

## Followup plan

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### Plastic Surgery Clinic

Phone: 902-473-7518

4th floor, Halifax Infirmary, Robie Street entrance

Register at the kiosk, then turn left to go to the waiting area.

*Prepared by: Same Day Surgery, HI site  
Designed by: NSHA Library Services*