

Frequently Asked Questions

Kelly Holtkamp, M.D.

Pain Management

- Apply a COLD PACK over the bandage for 20 minutes to decrease swelling and pain. Repeat as necessary.
- ELEVATE your extremity above the heart to reduce the swelling and pain.
- We encourage GENTLE MOTION of your fingers to reduce stiffness and discomfort. The pumping action will help reduce the swelling. Do not try to move the finger(s) if they are wrapped in a protective splint.

Pain Medication

- Take the pain medication with food to avoid upset stomach.
- DO NOT DRIVE OR DRINK ALCOHOL while taking narcotic pain medications.
- Do not take acetaminophen (Tylenol) with the pain medication. Most pain medications already contain acetaminophen. The maximum allowable daily dose is 4000 mg in adults and 90 mg/kg in children. Taking too much acetaminophen can cause liver damage and possible death.
- Anti-inflammatory medications (i.e. Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, and Aleve) can be very effective in controlling your pain. Follow the instructions on the bottle for dosing. Do not take the medication if you have a history of kidney disease, liver disease, peptic ulcer, or are on a blood thinner (i.e. Coumadin, Plavix.)
- Your pain should gradually decrease and require less medication over time. As your pain decreases you should decrease the amount and frequency of your medication.
- The anesthesiologist may have given you a regional nerve block (an injection in your neck), to numb your hand and arm. This is to help control your pain. The nerve block will numb your arm for approximately 18 hours after surgery. Do NOT wait for the block to wear off to start your pain medication. It is recommended that you start your pain medication when you get home. The nerve block wears off quickly and without significant notice. Therefore, it is important to have some pain medication in your system before the block wears off to ease the pain.

Diet

- Start with soft, non-dairy, bland foods. Gradually advance your diet as tolerated.
- If you are experiencing nausea or vomiting, stop solid foods. It is okay to continue non-carbonated liquids (Water, Gatorade) as tolerated.

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Bandage

- Do NOT remove the surgical bandage. The purpose of the bandage and splints is to immobilize and protect the surgery area, and to promote healing.
- Keep the bandage clean and dry. If your bandage or splint becomes wet or dirty, please contact the office.
- For showering or bathing, wrap the bandage with a plastic bag. Reusable cast covers are available at most pharmacy stores. Or you can use newspaper bags or veterinarian gloves (Sold at Farm and Fleet.) Seal the bag with a rubber band, tape, or GLAD Press'n Seal®.
- If the bandage feels too tight, it is okay to loosen the bandage, but do NOT remove any splints under the bandage.
- ARM SLING: The arm sling is to be used as needed. The arm sling is used when ambulating for a prolonged period of time to help keep the arm elevated to reduce swelling. During rest, the arm sling is removed to allow gentle motion of the shoulder, elbow and wrist to prevent joint stiffness.

Contact the physician office (815) 455-0800

- SIGNS OF INFECTION: These include increasing redness, swelling, warmth, tenderness or pain, a red line extending from the wound or bandage, pus-like discharge or a temperature of 101 degrees or higher.

Occupational Therapy

Call 815 444-8037 to schedule an appointment to start your therapy. Your first appointment should start 10-14 days after your surgery, unless instructed otherwise by Dr. Holtkamp. No therapy needs to be scheduled. Dr. Holtkamp's staff will discuss when to initiate therapy with you at your first follow-up appointment.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: Crystal Lake Office
Huntley Office

Follow-up Appointment

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: Crystal Lake Office
Huntley Office

Please call (815) 455-0800 if you do not have a follow-up appointment. Schedule an appointment _____ days after surgery.