



Hand & Arm Post-op Patient Information Sheet

The Hand Center
OF WATERBURY

Take It Easy

After surgery the most important thing is to take it easy. One of the most common mistakes people make is to try too much too soon.

Elevate your Hand/Arm

In addition to taking it easy, the most important way you can help yourself is to keep your hand/arm **elevated**. Your heart is a very powerful pump and will create swelling any time your hand is low. I have found that keeping your hand at chin level or higher to be the right amount of height—whether you are sitting, reclining or lying down. Think of creating a waterfall where your hand is at the top and your shoulder is at the bottom. Use as many pillows or blankets as you need to keep it **elevated**. Most people find it beneficial to keep their hand/arm elevated for 2-3 days. If your hand/arm is throbbing, you may not be elevating it high enough or long enough.

Anesthetic Blocks

You may have had a “local” block where I numbed your hand or fingers or you may have had an “axillary” or arm block performed by your anesthesiologist. Everyone’s metabolism is different and this will effect when the block wears off. Typically, the block wears off in 6-8 hours; it is not unusual to have some lingering numbness the morning after surgery. If you have a new onset of numbness, call my office.

Pain Medication

You were given a prescription for pain medication for your comfort. As soon as you begin to feel tenderness, you should begin taking pain medication. You may take two (2) pills every four(4) to six (6) hours for the first 2-3 days if you need to. Most patients find that one pill or even one half of a pill will control their pain. You may find that you get relief taking 2 pills for a day or two and then you may need only one pill and then no pills at all.

You can call our office with any questions about prescriptions between 8 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

Ice

Ice will help decrease pain and swelling. Often the bandage I place is bulky and insulates your incision from the cold—try it anyway. If you have an incision on your palm, place the palm of your hand on a bag of ice. If your operation is on the inside of your elbow, place the bag so that the inside of your elbow rests on the bag. Use ice about 15-30 minutes an hour while you are awake and as long as you feel a benefit. I recommend using a large zip-lock type bag for the ice.

Post-op Appointment

Your post op appointment has been arranged for about 10-14 days, except in special surgical circumstances. You will have received this date and time in my office and it is also written on your discharge instruction sheet from the surgical center. Depending on your surgery, you may have a therapy appointment scheduled for the very same day.

? Questions

Please call our office if you have any questions at **203-755-7115**.

Patient Signature: _____ Date: _____