

De Quervain's Tenosynovitis Post-Op Instructions

Overview:

You have had a De Quervain's tenosynovitis release at your wrist. This means that the tight tunnel over the tendons in your wrist has been released. This is usually done with local freezing. The freezing used in the operation usually takes 2-5 hours to come out. As freezing comes out you will begin to feel a tingling feeling in the area, this is when you should begin taking your pain medication.

After Surgery:

After your surgery you will have a bulky dressing in place. This is called the "Hollywood Bandage". After a De Quervain's release, some patients still have pain in the area of the tendonitis, it is important to wear your splint at all times after your operation. However, you can also remove your hand from the splint in order to care for your incision and let it breath.

It is important that you keep it elevated above the level of your heart to reduce pain and swelling. You may also want to sleep with your hand and arm elevated on pillows to help reduce pain and swelling.

Incision Care:

Remove your dressing two days after surgery. You should wash your incision with running water and a mild/unscented soap (do not submerge in water- dishwasher, bath water, etc.), pat dry, and apply a thin layer of Polysporin or Vaseline and a band aid. Stitches are usually dissolving, but if your surgeon tells you that the stitches need to be removed, they are removed at 2 weeks post operatively.

Activity and Care at Home:

It is important that after your operation you continue to move your fingers and to keep your hand elevated above the level of your heart. You do not need to aggressively exercise your hand and wrist as this can make your tendonitis worse. It is best to use gentle movement and rest for 2 weeks after your operation and increase your activity only at the guidance of your hand therapist and surgeon. You may want to wear your wrist brace for the first couple weeks if it feels better to do so.

As a general rule, it is a good idea to move your hand after any hand surgery, but do not use it. This includes heavy lifting (over 5lbs), or heavy gripping.

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Pain Management:

To manage pain, you should take both acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil) together every 4-6 hours as directed on the packaging. It is important not to take more medication than directed on the packaging. You may want to apply an ice pack, but ice only for 10 minutes at a time to prevent injury/ frostbite to the skin.

IMPORTANT:

If you have had hand surgery under a general anaesthetic or sedation you must not drive or operate other machinery for 24 hours after surgery. Please note that the Motor Vehicle Act of BC 195 (1) prohibits operation of a motor vehicle if "the control of the driver over the driving mechanism of the vehicle... is obstructed." Driving with a hand injury or cast in place that impairs your ability to hold the steering wheel is therefore in violation of the Act. You may resume driving once you have return of function to your operated hand and no longer require narcotic pain medication.

Contact your surgeon's office if any of the following occur;

- Increasing pain rather than decreasing pain.
- Increased swelling or redness around the wound.
- Fever and chills.
- If you experience a fall.
- If you have any opening areas.

If you experience shortness of breath or leg or calf pain, call 9-1-1 or visit your local emergency department.