



# *Post Operative Instructions: Percutaneous Wrist/Hand Fracture Fixation*

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## **ACTIVITY**

- You **may not bear weight** on the operated hand until permitted by your physician. You may go forward with gentle progressive range of motion when approved by your orthopedic surgeon.
  - Fine motor with the operative hand is encouraged, this being writing, typing, drawing, tablet work etc. No lifting, pushing, pulling or overuse until notified that this is OK. Range of motion of the elbow while keeping it tight to your side is also ok.
  - Once the pins are removed you will start to go forward with shoulder range of motion, physical therapy will help with this. Feel free to call our office for a referral as some insurances require this.
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## **SPLINT**

- If you have been given a splint, keep the splint on at all times, we will remove this during your visit to the clinic.
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## **DRESSING & INCISIONS**

- A small amount of red-tinged drainage on the dressing during the first 2 days is normal.
  - Keep the dressing clean and dry; protect it while bathing or showering.
  - Keep the dressing intact until your first post op, if the dressing becomes soiled prior to that scheduled appointment, contact the clinic for a dressing change.
  - Do not apply Bacitracin or other ointments.
  - Avoid soaking in pools, lakes, hot tubs, or the ocean until sutures are removed and the incision is fully healed.
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## **PAIN & INFLAMMATION**

### Ice

- Apply ice wrapped in a dry towel 20 minutes at a time, several times per day for the first week, then as needed.

### Compression

- You can adjust the splint and/or acewrap as needed.

### Elevation

- You may notice that your fingers will get swollen if your arm is hanging by your side for long periods of time, therefore keep your arm **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 2 to 3 days.

### Pain Medications

- Take your prescribed medications as directed.

#### Tylenol (Acetaminophen)

- First-line for pain.
- Take 500-650 mg every 6–8 hours.
- Do not exceed 1000 mg per dose or 3000 mg per day.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking Tylenol.

#### Anti-inflammatory

- As needed for postoperative swelling
- Do not take after fusion or with surgeries at risk for nonunion.

#### Opioid

- For moderate to severe breakthrough pain only.
- Use sparingly and wean off as soon as possible.

#### Common side effects include:

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Do not drive or operate machinery.
- Itching: Benadryl may help.
- Constipation:
  - Use stool softeners (e.g., Senna-Docusate) or OTC options (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc).
  - Avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, and yogurt (may worsen constipation).
  - Light walking helps stimulate bowel function.

#### Refills:

- If you think you will need a refill, you must request it during regular weekday office hours.
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### EMERGENCIES

You must have someone stay with you during the first 48 hours after surgery.

Call the clinic or the on-call orthopedist if:

- Drainage soaks the dressing, increases, smells foul, or if incisions become red, warm, or very painful.
  - You develop a fever  $>101.5^{\circ}\text{F}$  or chills.
  - You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or difficulty breathing.
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### FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Schedule a follow-up appointment at ~2 weeks postoperatively for a wound check, suture removal, and review of your surgery (if not already scheduled).
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