



Post-Operative Instructions: Fracture, Osteotomy, Shortening, Malunion, or Nonunion

General Instructions:

1. Do NOT drive a car or operate hazardous machinery.
2. Do NOT drink alcoholic beverages.
3. Do NOT smoke.
4. Do NOT sign legal documents.
5. If prescribed narcotic pain medications: DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL OR DRIVE A VEHICLE OR OPERATE HAZARDOUS MACHINERY WHILE TAKING THESE MEDICATIONS. It is recommended that you take pain medications on a full stomach or with a snack.
6. Notify the office / surgeon of the following:
 - Excessive swelling/redness around the wound area.
 - Excessive vomiting
 - Temperature greater than 101.5 F
 - Uncontrolled pain

Cast or splint care

- All casts or splints placed in the operating room should be kept clean and dry until follow-up in the office.
- Moisture will weaken the cast/splint, which may affect healing. Moisture may also lead to skin irritation and skin infection. 1-2 plastic bags over the cast/splint can keep it dry while you shower or bathe. Alternatively, waterproof cast covers can be purchased from Amazon
- Keep sand, dirt, and powder away from the inside of your cast or splint.
- Do not pull the padding out of your cast or splint.
- Do not stick objects (ie coat hangers, chopsticks, forks) inside the cast to scratch itching skin. It can scrape and cut your skin and result in a skin infection.
- Do not blow a hairdryer down the cast or splint. This may burn the skin.
- Do not apply powders or deodorant to skin underneath the cast.
- Do not alter your cast or splint yourself.
- Inspect the skin around the cast. If your skin becomes red or raw around the cast, call the office.
- Inspect the cast regularly. If it becomes cracked or develops soft spots, call the office.
- **Please call the office IMMEDIATELY for advice if you have any of the following:**
 - Increased pain or swelling that may indicate that the cast or splint is too tight
 - Numbness and/or tingling in your hand or loss of active movement of the fingers may be due to too much pressure on the nerves from a tight dressing
 - Your hand is cool and pale which may be from poor blood flow from a tight dressing

If the office is closed, we recommend evaluation at the nearest emergency room

After Surgery:

Diet: Regular diet as tolerated

Medication: Take pain medication as needed and directed.

Ice: Use ice as needed

Elevation: Keep surgical site elevated above the level of your heart as needed for swelling/pain

Sling: If you were given a sling, use it until your arm wakes up from the block. Discontinue sling by postop day 2 or 3. Please disregard if you were not given a sling.

Activity:

Lifting: You can WBAT < 3 lbs until 6 weeks post-operatively. It is OK to perform light activities of daily living. Heavy exercise, strenuous activity, and lifting heavier than that is **strictly forbidden**. You should be particularly careful with your operated extremity. Progression and strengthening will start around 6 weeks but ultimately only once cleared at the discretion of a member of your hand care team. **Lifting more than this, even once, can compromise and negate the outcome of your surgery.**

Motion: To prevent stiffness, move all uninjured fingers outside of the splint/cast and your shoulder and elbow gently and often.



Shower: Ok to shower but keep affected extremity splint dry at all times so you should cover with two plastic bags and tie them off above your splint or dressing. No bathing or going underwater.

Exercise: Do not exercise or perform any strenuous activity until cleared by your surgeon.

Other: Any activity that requires precise thinking and accuracy (including operating machinery and/or driving a vehicle) must be avoided for the first 12 hours.