

Patient and Family Education

Post-surgery – Taking care of your hands

Dear Patient,

The following instructions contain general information and advice regarding your condition and are designed to provide you with a guide on how best to safeguard your health. However, they are not intended to be exhaustive instructions. In specific cases you may receive different/additional instructions from your doctor. You are advised to follow any specific written or oral instructions given to you by your doctor or healthcare worker. Please seek clarification in case of doubt.

This page contains generic information on how to take care of your hand after your surgery. Always check with your care team if you have doubts.

1) Swelling

Swelling may persist up to few weeks after operation. Controlling the swelling helps to improve pain and speed up your recovery.

- When lying down, you should keep your operated hand above the level of your heart
- Use a pillow when you are sitting or lying down
- Keep your operated hand upwards when walking around
- Do the hand exercises that you have been taught to do

2) Wound care

- Keep your dressings clean and dry
- Protect your dressing with a waterproof cover (e.g. a plastic bag) when showering
- Use a wet tissue to wipe the unaffected fingers over operated hand
- If the dressing gets wet, dirty or loose, go to nearby polyclinic or General Practitioner
- The stitches are usually removed 14 days after surgery (unless otherwise instructed by your doctor)
- Avoid smoking as it may delay wound healing.

3) Pain management

Hand numbness and tingling is common after surgery. This is due to the local anesthetics that are used during surgery. This usually last for 6-12 hours

- Take your pain medication as directed
- Avoid drinking alcohol when you are taking medication.
- Rest your hand and avoid carrying heavy objects
- Swelling control helps with pain reduction.

4) Rehabilitation

- Move all unaffected joints
- Do the hand exercises you have been taught to do
- Wear the splints/casts as you have been taught

5) When and how to seek further treatment

Seek urgent medical consultation with your doctor at the Department of Emergency Medicine of Singapore General Hospital if any one of the following conditions occurs:

- Fever of 38 °C and above
- Severe pain on the operated site not relieved by prescribed medication
- Your operated hand is cold, blue or numb
- Redness, swelling, odour and discharge (blood, fluid or pus) from the wound
- Any other abnormal and / or prolonged symptoms, which cause concern

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6) Follow - Up Appointment

- Keep your appointment(s) as scheduled, reschedule your appointment as soon as possible if you missed your appointment
- Report to Specialist Outpatient Clinic on your appointment date and time.
- For any change of appointments(s) in Singapore General Hospital Out-patient clinic, please download Singhealth Health Buddy Application or call the Singapore General Hospital appointment hotline at 63214377 **OR** email to appointments@sgh.com.sg.