



# Scaphoid Fracture Open Reduction and Internal Fixation

## Patient Postoperative Instructions

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### 0-2 weeks

#### Pain medication:

- Use your prescription pain medication as needed to control pain.
- If your arm was numbed (blocked) for the surgery by the anesthesiologist, begin taking pain medication before the block wears off.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotic/opioid pain medication.
- Unless you cannot take them for other medical reasons, it is ok to use over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. Advil or Aleve) in addition to your prescription pain medication. Do not take tylenol as your prescription already contains this medication.

#### Post-op Dressings:

- Keep the dressings and splint in place until your first postoperative visit.
- Elevation of the hand, along with ice on-and-off for 20 minutes at a time, will help with swelling and pain.
- It is ok to shower, but the dressings must stay clean and dry. Place a waterproof covering over the dressings while bathing or showering (such as a heavy plastic bag that is sealed with Saran wrap).
- If the dressings get dirty, wet, or come apart please contact the office to have the dressing re-done.

#### Motion:

- Start moving your fingers and thumb that are not in the splint as soon as possible.
- Gently work on moving your palm up (supination) and palm down (pronation), along with flexing and extending your elbow.
- You can use your hand for light activity, such as eating, drinking, or using a computer.
- Do not lift, carry, push, or pull anything heavier than a glass of water or can of soda.

### 2-6 weeks (First post-op visit)

#### Splint:

- The postoperative splint and sutures will be removed at your 2-week visit.
- You will be placed in to a cast or splint at your first postoperative visit; if a cast was placed you will be converted to a splint at 6 weeks.
- Your cast/splint should be worn full-time, including during any hand exercises.

#### Motion:

- Continue to focus on recovering finger motion, as well as motion of the last joint of your thumb.
- Continue to avoid lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling anything heavier than a glass of water.

## **6 -10 weeks (Second post-op visit)**

### Splint:

-Begin to wean from the splint at 8 weeks depending on your x-ray findings.

### Motion:

- Continue finger, forearm, and elbow range of motion.
- Begin wrist motion.
- Begin gentle finger and forearm strengthening.
- You can lift/carry up to 5lbs (about 1/2 gallon of milk) as your symptoms allow at 8 weeks.
- You can lift/carry up to 10-15 lbs starting at 10 weeks as your symptoms allow and based on radiographic healing.

## **10-12 weeks (Third post-op visit)**

### Splint:

-No longer necessary.

### Motion:

- Continue finger and forearm strengthening.
- You can lift and carry to tolerance.
- No activity restrictions after 12 weeks or once the bone has healed.
- Transition to a home exercise program.

## **12+ weeks (Third post-op visit)**

If needed, therapy can be continued to focus on further strengthening or work conditioning. There are no lifting/carrying or other activity restrictions after 12 weeks, unless otherwise discussed on a case-by-case basis.