

It is important to follow your orthopaedic surgeon's instructions carefully after you return home. You should ask someone to stay with you and check on you the evening after surgery.

**Swelling:** Keep your arm and hand elevated above your heart as much as possible. The more your injured hand is elevated the less swelling and pain will occur. Elevating is the best thing for decreasing pain and swelling after hand surgery.

**Dressing Care:** You will leave the hospital with a dressing covering your hand. Do not remove the dressing. Leave it in place until your first follow-up appointment. You must keep the dressing clean and dry.

**Bearing Weight:** Do not put any weight on your operated hand/arm. Do not carry anything with your operated hand.



**Bathing/ Showering:** Keep the dressings clean and dry until your follow up appointment 10-14 days after surgery.

**Driving:** It is illegal for you to drive if you have any disability or if you are taking narcotic pain medication.

**Medications:** Generally you will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication to help relieve discomfort following surgery. Narcotic pain medications are constipating, so it is important that you eat a high fiber diet and drink plenty of water while you are taking them. You can not drive or operate any kind of machinery while taking pain medications. Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medications. It is important to take these medications as directed and only take them as necessary for pain.

**Warning Signs:** Call your orthopaedic surgeon immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Fever of 101.5° F or higher.
- Chills.
- Persistent warmth or redness around the dressings.
- Persistent or increased pain.
- Unusual bleeding (some surgical wound drainage is normal)
- Numbness or tingling.

Go to the Emergency Room immediately if you experience any CHEST PAIN or SHORTNESS OF BREATH, as these symptoms can be a sign of a life threatening condition.

**Follow-up Appointment:** You should have a follow-up appointment to see Dr. Grutter 10-14 days following surgery. If your follow-up appointment was not previously scheduled please call the office when you get home.

**Exercise Guide:** It is okay to gently move your elbow and fingers when you feel comfortable. At least three to four times a day bend the fingers to make a fist and then straighten the fingers.

