



BRIELLE ORTHOPEDICS

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Finger Surgery Instructions & Information

Preparation for Surgery:

Prior to your surgery, I will answer any questions you may have regarding your procedure and recovery. Most of this discussion will take place at your preoperative visit, when we fill out all necessary surgical paperwork.

Please remember that you should not eat or drink anything after midnight on the night before your surgery. This includes coffee or drinks on the morning of your operation. If you take certain necessary medications, please discuss this with me and/or your prescribing physician prior to your surgery to see if you need to take them on the morning of the operation, or wait until after the procedure. This includes blood thinner medications such as Coumadin or Warfarin. Certain surgeries can be done safely while on blood thinner medications while other surgeries require stopping these medications. If you are on a blood thinner, please contact the physician (typically your cardiologist) who prescribes the blood thinner and ask if it would be safe for you to stop taking the blood thinner prior to surgery.

The surgery center or hospital where your surgery will take place will call you the day before your operation to let you know what time you should arrive.

On the day of the operation, please shower or bathe and take care to wash the operative area well with soap and water. This will aid in decreasing the amount of bacteria on your skin, and will help to prevent postoperative infection. Also, keep in mind that most procedures will require anesthesia, which means that you will not be able to drive yourself home from the operation.

After you arrive at the surgery location, I will meet you in the preoperative area to confirm the planned operation and to fill out the remaining paperwork. I will be happy to answer any further questions at this time, and discuss the operation with any family members who may also have questions.

Please remember that I would rather you call with any questions prior to, or after, your operation than let your questions go unanswered!

Bandages & Sling:

It is important that you understand how to care for your surgery site properly. Some finger surgeries require a splint to keep your fingers from moving, while others only require a soft dressing to protect the surgery site from infection. If you have a hard splint in place, this should remain intact. If you have a hard splint in place, you should keep this on until your postoperative appointment, or until you see a hand therapist who will remove it for you.

If you do not have a hard splint in place, you will be given instructions on when to remove your dressing. Typically, you will remove his dressing 4 days after surgery at which point is is safe and encouraged to shower directly over your surgery site.

Washing & Bathing:

In general, keep the wound clean and dry for the first 4 days after surgery. Beginning on the fourth day after surgery it is safe to shower directly over the stitches. Please be gentle with the stitches. Let the soapy water run over the surgery site, but do not scrub the incision. The shower should be quick, and not too hot. Make sure to pat the wound dry with a clean towel and make sure it has dried sufficiently before placing a new dressing over the wound. This dressing is necessary to keep the stitches from being caught on something and pulled out, but can be a Band-Aid or simple gauze and small ACE wrap. Please do not soak the wound or bathe until after your stitches are removed. Avoid going in a swimming pool, lake or ocean until the stitches are removed.

You may find a yellow or orange discoloration on your skin after your surgery. This is a long lasting surgical prep used for sterilization. It is left in place because it acts to kill bacteria for hours. It will be difficult to remove with soap and water and often remains in place for days. Sometimes it can cause itching - if this is the case, try removing it with alcohol wipes first. If itching persists, take Benadryl which you can obtain at your local pharmacy without a prescription.

Ice, Elevation & Motion:

One of the goals that you can help to achieve after surgery is to minimize swelling at the surgery site. Elevating the surgical area above the level of the heart will minimize swelling, and this should be a focus of recovery during the first 48 hours. Application of ice to the surgical site for 20 minutes at a time will also reduce swelling and pain. Keep in mind that if you have a hard splint in place, only move the fingers that are not contained within the splint.

Physical Therapy:

Certain surgeries will require physical therapy within days of surgery. If this is the case, our office will get you set up for your first postoperative physical therapy session before your postoperative visit with me. For hand surgery, I typically recommend doing your therapy with a Certified Hand Therapist. Often, depending on the nature of your surgery, I will get you set up to see the therapist before you come back to my office for your postoperative visit. Your therapist will remove your dressing, assess your wound, and possibly construct a custom-built splint. If this is the case, after your surgery my office will contact you to get you set up with a Certified Hand Therapist and provide your prescription for therapy so the therapist knows exactly what to do.

Postoperative Appointment:

In general, I prefer for you to schedule your first postoperative visit at the same time you schedule your surgery. Typically, this visit should be 10-14 days after your surgery date unless otherwise instructed. Please use the blank line below to write down your follow up appointment date and time, so that you have an easy reference:

POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENT: _____
DATE TIME

Medications:

Current research shows that a combination of over-the-counter medications controls pain better than narcotic medication. A typical regimen of over-the-counter medications includes Tylenol and/or Advil. I recommend you try taking:

- 1000mg of Tylenol (Acetaminophen) every 8 hours
- 600mg of Advil (Ibuprofen) every 6 hours

By staggering the timing of your doses, this regimen can cut down on your pain. Once your pain is improving, you can wean down the dosage. Patients with a history of bleeding stomach ulcers, severe kidney disease, or on blood thinning medication should NOT take Advil/Ibuprofen/Aleve. Patients with liver disease should NOT take Tylenol/Acetaminophen.

At your preoperative visit, I will give you a prescription for a narcotic medication to control your postoperative pain. The type of medication and number of pills prescribed will depend on the nature of your operation. Please keep in mind that narcotic pain medications can NOT legally be refilled over the phone, so any requests for narcotic refills should be made during business hours - otherwise I will have no way of getting a new prescription to you.

Often, the anesthesiologist will perform a “block” which will completely eliminate pain for several hours after your surgery. Keep in mind that this block will wear off, and you should begin taking your pain medicine as soon as you begin to feel the block wearing off. Or, if it has not worn off by the time you go to bed, take a pain pill before going to sleep so that you do not awaken in severe pain if the block wears off while asleep.

Some patients may experience nausea with narcotic pain medications. The best prevention for this is to take the medicine with food.

Postoperative Complications:

If any of the following should occur, please do not hesitate to call our office at 732-840-7500.

- Increasing pain despite pain medications
- Drainage from the wound more than 2 days after your surgery
- Increasing redness, pain or swelling at the surgery site
- Fever greater than 101° which does not go down with Tylenol
- Nausea/vomiting with pain medication

Try to call during business hours in the case of a routine question or concern (8:00am - 4:00pm). For any urgent problems, the above office phone number is in service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you call after hours, the call will be routed to our answering service who will put you in touch with our “on-call” Physician Assistant. The Physician Assistant will be able to assist you, but if the Physician Assistant has any more serious concerns, the Physician on call will be contacted. Also remember that if any emergency occurs, you have the option of going to a local emergency room and/or calling 911 for immediate assistance.

All My Best For A Healthy Recovery,

Michael Nakashian, MD