



IMPROVING HEALTH

Post-Operative Care: Distal Radius Fracture Open Reduction and Internal Fixation

Wound Care

- Suture removal at 2 to 3 weeks.
- When sutures are removed, you are now able to get your hand wet in the shower, handwashing, use mild soap, and use hand sanitizer.
- No soaking in contaminated water such as dirty dish water, pools, hot tubs, baths, and lakes until surgical site is fully healed (2 to 3 weeks after sutures are removed).
- Cover with bandage if you are going to be in dirty environment. Otherwise, open to air.

Limitations

- The first two weeks there is no use of the hand that was operated on. Leave postoperative splint and dressing on until postop visit with clinic provider or therapy.
- Week 2 to 6 postoperatively, the weight limit is no more than 1 pound with occasional pinch and grip. Brace on day and night. Can remove for daily therapy exercises and personal hygiene.
- Week 6 to 10 post operatively, weight limit of 5-10 pounds with occasional pinch and grip. This is where you can start to slowly wean back into normal activity.
- Week 10 and beyond there are no limitations. Remember, you will be sore with some activities as you wean back into them.

Surgical Expectations

- You will be sore over the surgical site for up to three months, especially with direct pressure. Direct pressure on the wrist will also be limited and uncomfortable for 3-4 months.
- Soreness and swelling will fluctuate the first 3 to 4 months as you wean back into normal activity, this is normal.
- Strength in the hand will also take time to return, be patient.
- The range of motion in your wrist will take time to return. Symmetrical wrist flexion and extension may take up to a year, be patient. Continue exercises and using your hand normally as much as possible.

Therapy

- You will attend therapy 2 to 3 times a week. This will last anywhere from 8 to 12 weeks depending on how your recovery is going.
- Depending on your recovery, some adjustments in your therapy may occur for optimal results.
- Complete therapy exercises at home at least once a day for 12 weeks focusing on range of motion, scar massage, and strengthening.
- Therapy is key to a successful recovery.

Brace

- The first two weeks you will be in a postoperative splint and dressing. Please leave this on until first postop visit.
- Week 2 to 6, you'll be in a wrist brace the we will provide you at your first post-op visit. You must keep it on at all times(day and night). You can remove for daily therapy exercises and personal hygiene.
- Week 6 to 10, you will wean out of your brace. You can use your brace for more strenuous activities, off less strenuous activities.
- By week 10, you should be completely weaned out of your brace.

- Anytime you have a question.

When to Call
605.217.2667

- Decreased range of motion.

- Increased pain, redness, drainage, or numbness/tingling.