



## Eating and Drinking

Gradually resume your normal diet. The night of your surgery, begin with liquids and/or light foods. If you are feeling well enough in the morning, progress to your normal eating patterns. Eating a well-balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and drinking plenty of fluids may help alleviate constipation resulting from pain medication.

## Smoking and Smokeless Tobacco

Smoking and all other forms of tobacco can interfere with wound and fracture healing and may increase your pain levels.

**Call 216-778-HAND (4263)  
Comprehensive Hand and  
Upper Extremity Center if  
you have any questions.**



## Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery:

Post-op Care General Instructions



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**MyChart**  
metrohealth.org/mychart

## Dressing/Showering

You may shower as soon as you would like after surgery. If you have a dressing, cover it with a plastic bag to avoid getting it wet. If you have a dressing or splint, your doctor will instruct you how to care for it after surgery.



## Ice and Elevate

The use of ice after your surgery will help both with pain control and swelling. You should continue to use ice for the first 48 hours and then on an as-needed basis. Elevate the surgical site above the level of the heart on pillows as much as possible for the first 48 hours after surgery. This will help keep the swelling to a minimum and prevent throbbing and pain.



## Pain Medication

If you have received a nerve block, your arm and hand may be numb for 6-24 hours. You may be provided an oral pain medication prescription (opioid and/or NSAIDs).

***Rest and elevation are some of the most crucial factors for pain control. Take your pain medication as directed even if the pain is minimal with the block; do not wait for the pain to become out of control. The most severe pain occurs as the block wears off.***

Even if you are not having pain but feel your arm/hand "waking up", take your pain medication so that it will be working when needed. Pain medication may cause some tiredness, nausea or constipation. If these symptoms become significant, contact your surgeon's office and discontinue the medication.



**Avoid alcohol and driving while using opioid pain medication.**

Unless otherwise directed, you may take over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol or anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) medications (ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.) as directed on the label. Tylenol or NSAIDs can help with decreasing swelling after surgery.

## Driving

You may drive once you are:

1. No longer taking pain medications
2. Not in a splint/cast/sling
3. Can safely control a vehicle in an emergency situation



## Warning Signs

Observe your dressing and incision site for increased redness, swelling, drainage, foul odor or increased severe pain unrelieved by rest or pain medications. If any of the above occurs or if you develop a fever higher than 101 degrees, please notify your surgeon's office at **216-778-HAND** immediately.

**After 5pm on weekdays and on weekends and holidays, please call the MetroHealth Nurse Line at 216-778-7878.**

**For emergencies call 911.**