

Post-operative Instructions: Thumb CMC Arthroplasty

Dressing:

Please keep your dressing clean, dry, and intact until you follow up. It should be covered with a plastic bag and kept dry and out of the water while bathing.

Activity:

No lifting or weight bearing on your operative extremity. If you were given a sling, please take it off as soon as your arm is no longer numb to avoid stiffness in your elbow. Elevation and rest can help with pain control and swelling. To avoid finger stiffness, please move your fingers that were left out of your dressing by opening and closing them several times a day. You may use your fingers for light activity that does NOT cause pain, such as typing or using an iPad. **Please do not move your thumb or use your thumb for these activities.**

Pain control:

You will be given a prescription for narcotic pain medication. Please use the narcotic medication as sparingly as possible to avoid trouble with side effects (nausea, constipation, dizziness, addiction). If you are able to take anti-inflammatory medications based on your health history, it is okay to mix Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, or Aleve with the narcotic pain medication for additional pain relief. As your pain decreases, please wean yourself off of the narcotics as soon as possible by substituting over the counter medications instead (ie- Advil, Motrin, Tylenol, or Aleve). For constipation, you can take 300 mg of colace a day (colace is an over the counter stool softener).

Follow up:

Please follow up with Dr. Kitay in ~10 days. You will need to see hand therapy the same day that you see Dr. Kitay so the therapist can make you a splint. If you do not already have your post operative appointment and your hand therapy appointment set up, please call Hazel at 301-774-8905 ASAP so she can help you arrange them.

Return to work/school:

You may return to light activity at work once you no longer need narcotic pain medication. No lifting is allowed with your operative extremity. You may type with your other fingers, but **please rest your operative thumb and avoid using it during your post-operative period.**

For questions, please call the office: 301-657-9876