

**Post-operative Instructions:** Rheumatoid arthritis hand surgery

**Dressing:**

Please keep your dressing clean and dry until you see Dr. Kitay back in the office. Elevate your hand to minimize swelling. You may also put an ice pack over your operative site to help reduce pain and swelling.

**Activity:**

The more you rest in the first few days after surgery, the less pain, bleeding, swelling, and scar tissue you will have. **Please elevate your hand to reduce swelling and pain. Please do not lift anything heavier than your dinner fork with your operative hand.** You may use your hand for very light activity, but do not do any activity that causes pain.

**Pain control:**

You may 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). It is okay to take Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, or Aleve in addition to the narcotic pain medication if your medical history allows NSAIDs (but best to take those medications with food to avoid GI upset). Please do not mix Tylenol/Acetaminophen with your narcotic medication, as the narcotics often come with Tylenol/Acetaminophen mixed in. 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 make an appointment for 5-7 days after surgery.

**Return to work/school:**

You may return to light activity at work/school once you no longer need narcotic pain medication, but no lifting on the operative extremity is allowed.

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