

**DR. TREVOR M. BROOKS MD, FRCSC
PLASTIC, HAND & COSMETIC SURGERY**

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**CALL OUR OFFICE OR GO TO A WALK-IN CLINIC IF
YOU HAVE:**

- Fever over 37°C
- Yellow, green or foul-smelling drainage
- A large red area around the incision
- An allergic reaction to the medications, or dressings (this could be shortness of breath, a rash/redness, hives, etc.)

CARPAL TUNNEL OR OTHER HAND SURGERY POST OPERATIVE CARE INSTRUCTIONS**Dressing/Bandages:**

If your hand is in a splint, please disregard the instructions below and leave your dressing intact. The Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy department will call you to set up your appointment, should you require one. If you do not hear from them and Dr. Brooks told you that you would, please call our office and we will arrange it.

The large pressure dressing applied in the operating room should remain on, dry and intact for 1-3 days following surgery. You may shower or bathe during this time if you keep the dressing dry - use a bag or bathe with the area out of the water. Pat dry, no aggressive rubbing.

If you have Steri-strips under your large bandage, let them fall off on their own.

After the 3rd day remove the large dry dressing and protect your incision with a band-aid for 2-3 weeks. Once the Steri-strips fall off on their own, you can start to apply a very thin layer of Polysporin and continue to cover with a band-aid.

After the 3rd day water may now run over the area (shower/hand washing), but you are not to submerge the area in water for 3 weeks (no baths, hot tubs, pools, ocean/lake water or dishwasher). Your sutures are dissolvable and submerging them in water could open your incision up.

Your sutures are dissolvable (unless Dr. Brooks has said otherwise and rather has set you up for suture removal at the hospital). Dissolving sutures can take a full 4 weeks to completely dissolve. Occasionally they don't dissolve so easily, and in that case, you may need to call Dr. Brooks to have him look at them.

If it has been 3 weeks, and your incision has no open areas, then you can massage them to try to get them to break up. If you are not sure how, wait and Dr. Brooks will show you at your follow-up.

Medication:

Take your regular medication as prescribed (unless Dr. Brooks has specifically instructed you otherwise).

If you are prescribed an antibiotic, finish the entire prescription.

You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain, unless Dr. Brooks has instructed you otherwise. Avoid ibuprofen (Advil) and inflammatory medication (Aleve) for the first 4 days.

Return to Work:

Most patients take 2 weeks off and can return to work during weeks 3-4 after surgery with modified duties. People with jobs that require heavy lifting may require more time before returning to full duties. Dr. Brooks can provide you with a work note.

Activity:

Begin moving your hands and fingers on the day of surgery, but do not use your hand for any activities until the large dressing is removed.

Swelling is normal. Elevate the area above the level of your heart to minimize swelling, and keep the area elevated on a pillow while sleeping.

Off and on, apply an ice pack as needed to the area for the first 3-4 days. Do not use heat.

If the area is on your hand, avoid lifting, pushing, or pulling any object heavier than 10 lbs for the first 2 weeks (for reference, a 4L milk jug is 9 lbs).

Do not use exercise equipment or do cardio until Dr. Brooks gives you the go-ahead.

Avoid driving until you can safely operate a vehicle. If you are on pain medication, you must wait until you are finished with the medication).

You may begin scar massage at 2-3 weeks (if there are no open areas to the incision). Use firm pressure and cream (Vitamin A, Vitamin E, or Aloe Vera are all excellent choices), and push against the direction of the scar (perpendicular).

The skin around the incision will peel, this is normal.

A high quality vitamin and silicone scar gel is available at Dr. Brooks' office, but there are many available at most pharmacies as over-the-counter products.

Sunshine:

After 3 weeks, if your surgical site is to be exposed to sun, apply an SPF 45 or higher sunscreen and for at least 1 year after continue to do so to prevent the scar from changing to a darker colour.

Diet:

Resume your regular diet. Drink plenty of fluids.

Stay away from alcoholic beverages for 1 week. Limit caffeinated beverages for 1 week.

Avoid smoking/vaping for 3 months before and 6 weeks after surgery for better wound healing. Nicotine constricts blood vessels.

Your Follow Up Appointment: 6-8 weeks weeks after your surgery Dr. Brooks will want to see you again. To ensure you get in within this timeframe please call 403-487-0460 promptly after your surgery to set up the appointment.