

DR REBECCA AYERS
Plastic, Reconstructive and Hand Surgeon

POST HAND SURGERY ADVICE – Major Hand Surgery

Pain relief and Anaesthetic

- Local anaesthetic has been injected around the site of the operation; this area & the nearby fingers will remain numb for up to 10 hours after surgery
- Please take some pain relief early, before the effect of the anaesthetic wears off. Take this regularly for the next few days

Swelling & Stiffness

- Elevation of the hand will prevent swelling and stiffness
- Please do not walk with your hand dangling or sit with your hand in your lap for the next week or two
- Use a sling for today and tomorrow if you feel it is comfortable

Dressings

- The dressing will be removed at clinic
- There will be some bruising and swelling
- Once the dressings are removed it is safe to get the hand wet in the bath or shower, pat gently dry. Try and use a clean towel to dry your hand.
- If the skin is dry then briefly immerse the whole hand in warm water with a small amount of baby oil
- Hypafix tape for a further week may be used
- The stitches are dissolving and should fall after 2-3 weeks

Scarring

- The scar can be massaged when healed – usually beginning about 2 weeks
 - o Use a plain, unscented moisturizer, Vitamin E cream or Bio-oil type product
 - o 5 minutes twice a day
- Once healed the scar may become lumpy, firm, tender and pink
- With massage this should settle over 3 – 6 months

Driving

- You cannot drive in a splint
- Otherwise you may drive if you are comfortable and have regained FULL finger movements and are COMFORTABLE to control the vehicle with sufficient power

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Things to watch out for...

- INFECTION
 - o Increasing pain, swelling, redness, discharge from the wound
- PROLONGED CHANGE IN SENSATION
 - o Persistent change of sensation in an area of the hand once the local anaesthetic wears off
- PROGRESSIVE, PAINFUL OR ITCHY SCARS
 - o Scars that despite massage become progressively more swollen and tender, itchy and red
- CHRONIC PAIN & SWELLING IN THE HAND
 - o Worsening pain, out of proportion to what you expect