After Replantation Surgery

Information for patients of the Hand Clinic, and their families

Read this booklet to learn:

• how to care for yourself
• what problems to look out for
• how to take care of your wound sites
• who to call if you have any questions

Your doctor has replanted or repaired your limb or one (or more) of your fingers. Follow these instructions when you get home.
Can I take a shower when I get home?
You can shower, but wrap your hand or arm with plastic to keep it dry. Your doctor will tell you when it is ok to get the area wet.

What do I need to know about my food or diet?

**Important:**

• **Don’t eat or drink any foods with caffeine for 3 months.**
  This includes coffee, tea, chocolate, and pop.

• **Don’t drink alcohol for 3 months.**

• **Don’t smoke.** This includes any kind of cigarette, cigar, or pipe tobacco.
  Keep away from second hand smoke.

Caffeine and smoking narrow your blood vessels. This reduces the blood supply to your fingers and limb.

Alcohol can swell your blood vessels. This affects your circulation and keeps blood from flowing to your fingers.

How should I care for my injured fingers or limb?

• Keep your injured limb raised when resting. You can use pillows or cushions to raise it. This lessens or prevents swelling.

• **Don’t use a sling.** Keep your hand raised when you walk by using your own arm strength.

• Exercise your injured limb at the elbow and shoulder at least 4 to 5 times each day.

• Keep your injured limb covered and warm in cold temperature. Letting it become too cold can cause you a lot of pain.
• Be careful when using your limb to touch something hot. While you are healing, you will not have as much feeling in your limb. You may not feel the heat and burn yourself.

How should I care for my wound?

It is important to keep your wound sites clean and dry.

• Clean the incision (cut) lines with cotton swabs soaked in normal saline (salt water). Do this 3 times each day. You can make your own saline by:
  ▪ boiling 1 litre of water for 3 minutes
  ▪ adding 1 tablespoon of salt
  ▪ letting it sit until it is cool enough to use

Use a small amount that is made fresh daily.

• Put a small amount of Polysporin® on the incision line area.

• Watch your wound for signs of infection.

Call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room if:

• your swelling gets worse, even when your hand or limb is raised

• the redness around your wound sites gets worse

• your fingers become blue or white

• your pain or tenderness gets worse, even after taking pain medicine

• you have pain or swelling in your feet, legs or calves

• your temperature rises above 38 °C or 101 °F and you feel chills

• you have pus (yellowish liquid) coming from your wound
How do I care for my splint?

Keep your splint clean and dry. You can wash your splint with cool soapy water and towel dry. Keep your splint away from heat or hot water. Heat can change the shape of your splint.

What about medicines?

Your doctor may have given you prescriptions for medicines to take at home. Please follow the instructions for taking them. Your family doctor will be able to order more of your medicines if you need them.

To manage your pain, take pain medicine before your pain becomes too bad. Take it when your pain is at number 4 on the pain scale below.

• Don’t take any pain medicines that have caffeine, such as Tylenol 1, 2, or 3. Talk to your pharmacist before beginning any pain medicines.

• You can take regular or extra-strength Tylenol when your daily pain isn’t as bad.

Ask your doctor if you can start taking medicines you were taking before your surgery.
When will I see my doctor again?

We will give you an appointment date to see your doctor and hand therapist.

Your follow-up appointment will be on:

Date: _______________________  Time: ______________

You will see Dr.____________________________________

Please bring your health card (OHIP) with you to your appointment.

Who can I call if I have any questions?

If you have any questions, please the Hand Clinic at 416 603 5340.

Doctors:

Dr. D. Anastakis      416 603 5790
Dr. H. Baltzer       416 603 5449
Dr. H. Von Schroeder 416 603 5641
Dr. J. Ahmad         416 603 4924
Dr. M. Furey         416 603 5839
Dr. S. McCabe        416 603 5455

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information.

Contact us to provide feedback or request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats: pfep@uhn.ca