



## Hand & Wrist Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

**Elevation:** elevation is very important after hand/wrist surgery. The hand/wrist should be elevated above the level of the heart for one to four days following surgery – depending on the procedure that was done. A sling does not allow sufficient elevation in the first few days.

- When standing, you should hold your hand at or above your shoulder level.
- When sitting, rest your elbow on a padded surface with your hand pointing straight up.
- When in bed or on a couch, put a pillow beneath your upper arm, and another on your abdominal area and rest your arm on the pillows.

**Exercises:** unless your fingers are immobilized, you should begin finger and thumb range of motion exercises immediately. Straighten your fingers as much as possible and then flex them to “make a fist.”

**Pain:** pain and swelling will be decreased by maintaining elevation. Again, this is very important. Take the pain medication as directed, as necessary.

**Dressing:** unless otherwise instructed, keep your dressing on and keep it dry. Cover your hand with a plastic bag or commercially available ‘cast cover’ when showering. Remember; keep your hand elevated to avoid water running down into the dressing.

Patient: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician: \_\_\_\_\_