

**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 degrees
- 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 discard 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 in tact for 1-3 days following surgery. You may shower or bath 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 nor 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.

Medication: Take your regular medications as prescribed (unless Dr. Brooks has specifically instructed you otherwise). For pain take Acetaminophen (TYLENOL) unless Dr. Brooks has instructed you otherwise.

AVOID ADVIL (ibuprofen) and inflammatory meds (Alleve) for the first 4 days.

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

Return to Work: Most patients take 2 weeks off and are able to return to work 3-4 weeks after the surgery. People with jobs that require heavy lifting may require more time before returning to full duties. We can provide you a work note.

Activity: Begin moving your hand 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.

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

If the area is on your hand, then avoid lifting, pushing, 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 until Dr. Brooks has given you the go ahead.

Avoid driving until you can safely operate the vehicle (if on pain medication, wait until you are done).

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

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

A high quality Vitamin & silicone scar gel is available at Dr. Brooks's office, but there are many available at most pharmacies over the counter.

Diet: Resume your regular diet. Drink plenty of fluids, but stay away from alcoholic drinks for 1 week and limit caffeinated drinks for 1 week.

Avoid Smoking for ideally 3 months before, but at least 4 weeks before and 6 weeks after surgery for better wound healing. Nicotine constricts blood vessels.

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

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