

Dr. Susanne Roberts
Columbia University Medical Center
Hand, Upper Extremity, and Microsurgery

Post-Operative Instructions Sheet

1. **Keep dressing/splint/ cast as dry and clean as possible.** When bathing/showering cover the affected area with a plastic bag to keep it dry. Keep the affected area elevated during showering.
2. Do not remove the dressing until your follow up appointment
3. **Keep the affected area elevated** above our heart at all times for the first few days. This will significantly reduce swelling. Do not replace any jewelry until the swelling subsides. You may notice bruising or swelling outside of the affected area. This is normal as fluid follows gravity down and the lymphatic system back up your extremity.
4. You may put an ice bag/cold pack on the affected area to help with pain and reduce swelling.
5. Move the body parts in your upper extremity that are not immobilized to reduce stiffness and swelling.
6. If you were prescribed narcotic pain medication such as Norco or Percocet which contains acetaminophen (Tylenol) you cannot take additional Tylenol. If needed, you may take other NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as Motrin (Ibuprofen) or Aleve (Naproxen) in addition to the prescribed medication. It is best to stagger when you take narcotics and NSAIDs so that you are always covered by one of the two medications.
7. If you had upper extremity block for pain control you should start to take your pain medication when you begin to feel sensation returning. Do not wait until the block is completely worn off.
8. Pain medication can cause nausea. In this case attempt to reduce the dosage or just take Tylenol or other NSAIDs alone.
9. Pain medication can also cause constipation. In this case you may also want to take an over the counter stool softener such as Colace or Senna as directed.
10. If you have fever, excessive drainage, pain that is not relieved by medication, adverse reaction to the medication prescribed, or numbness that does not improve please contact Dr. Roberts' office at (914) 787-3297. If no one can be reached and it is an emergency please go to the Emergency Room.