

**Joint Replacement, Sports Medicine,
Fracture Care & General Orthopaedics**

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WRIST ORIF (Open Reduction, Internal Fixation) - Postoperative Instructions

Follow-up appointment: Our office will call you the next business day after surgery to schedule a postoperative visit (7-10 days postop). At that time you will be given the opportunity to ask questions about your surgery or discuss any difficulties you may have.

About your dressing: Your wrist is covered with a sterile dressing and splint following the procedure, and this should be kept on until your follow-up appointment. Please try to keep it clean and dry. You may shower or bathe, but be sure that the dressing is covered with a plastic bag and out of the flow of water. If there is excessive drainage, contact your surgeon. The stitches used to close the wound are made of nylon and will be removed when you return for your first follow-up visit.

About pain and swelling: Some discomfort is to be expected following this surgery. Your surgeon uses a local anesthesia surrounding the incision that will provide pain relief for 6-10 hours following surgery. The best way to control the discomfort is to keep the hand elevated (above the level of the heart) and apply ice (enclosed in a plastic bag and wrapped in a dry towel) to the hand for 20 minutes out of an hour, repeating as needed.

For pain, use the narcotic medication that your doctor ordered. Please do not combine narcotics with alcoholic beverages.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (like Motrin, Advil or Aleve) may be used with or instead of the narcotic medication.

Postoperative activities: The fingers are left free so they can be moved as much as possible. Using the fingers immediately will speed up your recovery and help the pain to disappear more quickly. Avoid any lifting greater than 5 pounds or repetitive activities for the first month or until cleared by your doctor. At your first follow-up visit, a removable splint may be provided and you can start with gentle range of motion exercises at that time.

Return to driving/work: Please do not drive for 24 hours following surgery. **OK to resume driving when you are no longer taking narcotics and can comfortably grip the steering wheel.** Return to work will depend on your work duties- this should be discussed with your surgeon.

Warning signs: Please call our office at **(978)534-6333** for fevers, chills, excess drainage, severe pain or any questions