

Post Operative Wounds

Hand Service

Surgical Wound

Post-surgical care is essential for proper healing and recovery after hand surgery. Proper care of the wound can help prevent infection and promote healing.

After hand surgery, the wound will be covered with a dressing. The dressing should be kept clean and dry and should be changed as directed by your surgeon and your hand therapist.

Your bulky post-surgical dressing will typically remain in situ for 7-10 days or 14 days, depending on the surgery you have had. If you require Hand Therapy following your surgery, you will be contacted by the Hand Therapy Department and provided with an appointment to attend the specialist unit at Ashford Hospital.



Keep dressing dry
Keep dressing clean
Use hand for light activity only

Sutures

Most patients seen within the hand therapy department with a surgical wound will have sutures that require removal – these are removed by the hand therapist 14 days post-surgery and a further dressing will be applied. You will be advised when to remove it or provided with another appointment if required. Your therapist will discuss this with you at your appointment as some wounds take a little longer to heal.





Looking After Your Wound

To help your wound along the you must keep your dressing clean and dry. Use your hand for light activity only and not for heaving lifting or gripping. **Eat well, reduce caffeine intake, don't smoke, and don't consume alcohol.**

As advised by your therapist, it is okay to move your as we need to get your hand moving to avoid your joints becoming stiff. You will be provided with a home exercise plan and advised how often and how many times to complete these.

Do not ...

It would be best if you refrained from making plans to travel while you have a wound. Should any concerns arise, this may not be dealt with promptly. You are also advised not to drive while you are immobilised or have sutures in situ.

Pain and Swelling

Pain and inflammation can be managed with over-the-counter pain relievers such as ibuprofen. If you have been prescribed antibiotics, be sure to take them as directed and finish the course.


It is important to keep the wound elevated to reduce swelling. You should avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity as this can increase blood flow to the area and delay healing. You may be given exercises to do to help with range of motion and stiffness. These can also help to reduce your swelling.

Possible Problems with Wound Healing

If you have diabetes, smoke, or a medical problem that dampens your immune system, your wound may take a little longer to resolve. We will monitor your wound regularly with appropriate dressing changes for your wound.

Potential signs of infection include **feeling hot, increased weeping through the dressing, increased pain and odour.**

If you have any concerns, we recommend contacting the hand therapy department as soon as possible on 01784 884043 within the opening hours of 8 am to 4 pm. If out of hours, it is advised that you attend your local walk-in centre for wound review. **Please** still call the hand therapy department on the next working day to inform your therapist who will provide you with further advice on the ongoing management of your wound. **This is important as we can contact your surgeon if required.**



In general, proper post-surgical care is essential for the best possible outcome after hand surgery. Be sure to follow your surgeon's instructions carefully, and to keep all follow-up appointments to monitor your progress.

Further Information

We endeavor to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.



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