

After your hand or arm surgery

After your surgery

- Take your pain medication as instructed.
- Raise your hand or arm and keep up as much as possible to prevent swelling and to decrease the pain.
- Sometimes the anesthetic used during surgery blocks pain and sensation (feeling) for a period of time after surgery. Sensation usually returns within 12 hours. This time varies with all patients.

Check your hand or arm every hour while you are awake for:

- **Warmth** – should be warm to touch.
- **Colour** – should be close to your natural colour (like your other hand or arm).
- **Feeling or sensation** – you should be able to move and feel your fingers.

If you have a cast, splint or backslab:

- It will take about 48 hours for your cast to dry. Let it dry naturally. Do not get your cast wet. Protect it when you use water. Leave it uncovered to dry.
- If you have a backslab, keep the bandage on.
- Support the cast with a pillow when you are lying down. Keep it higher than your heart.
- Only use a sling to support the hand or arm if told to by your surgeon.
- Do not put anything down your cast to scratch your skin. This may lead to a sore that won't heal under the cast.

Dressing and incision care

- Please follow the instructions from your surgeon.

Call your surgeon if you:

- have a fever of 38°C (100°F) or higher
- increasing bleeding through your cast or bandage
- notice your hand or arm becoming:
 - cold to touch
 - numb
 - blotchy, bluish-purple
 - extremely painful
 - more swollen

Emergency

Go to the Emergency Department if you have:

- shortness of breath
- chest pain

Follow-up

You will be given a follow-up appointment with your surgeon.