

**LINDA M. WATERS, MD., F.R.C.S.(C), FACS**

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
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**Hand Surgery Post-Operative Instructions**

1. **Diet:** Start with clear liquids (soups, jello, juices, popsicles, carbonated beverages or water). Advance to your regular diet.
2. **Activity:** Refrain from any strenuous activity for 48 hours. After surgery, the operated hand (or finger) swells some what in response to injury. This can be controlled best by raising the hand above the level of the heart during the day by holding it up, at night by putting your arm on a pillow. After 3-5 days, the hand can be in any position, up or down, but if it swells or hurts, elevate it. Do not use a sling unless your doctor has specifically said to do so. Patients experience varying amounts of pain after an operation on skin, tendons, or nerves. You will receive a prescription for pain-relief medication. As soon as you can, try to use only Tylenol every 4 hours.
3. **Care of Operated Site:** When you bathe or shower, cover the dressing with a plastic bag, held tightly at the opening with rubber bands. If you have any questions or problems following your surgery, contact Dr. Waters. If you are unable to reach Dr. Waters, go to the nearest emergency room.
4. **Miscellaneous:**  
No alcohol for 24 hours or while taking pain medication.  
No driving until sutures are removed (5-6 days).

Call Dr. Waters if:

You are unable to drink liquids in the morning because of nausea.

You are unable to urinate eight hours after your surgery.

Your temperature is greater than 101.5.

You have heavy bleeding.

Please go to the emergency room if you feel you need to be seen immediately.

5. **What to Expect:** Tingling or Burning in Arm or Hand - If you had a local or block anesthetic, your hand may tingle or burn as the anesthetic wears off. This disappears within several hours. If numbness persists to the next day, call Dr. Waters.
6. **Contact Information:**  
Office (650)328-9646  
Dr. Waters' Pager (650) 723-8222 ID# 13514