

Traumatic Hand Injury

What to Expect

HOSPITAL STAY

Most hand surgery is done as a day surgery, though, in some instances, you may be required to stay overnight or longer.

Dr Taylor will not be in to visit you whilst you are in the hospital. He will phone your nurses for daily updates and provide over-the-phone instructions. He will come in to see you if you have any issues.

Our specialist nurse will follow up with you on the phone once you have been discharged. You will also be given her direct contact number. Feel free to phone or message her 9 am - 5 pm, 7 days a week, if you have any questions or concerns.

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU BOOK OFF WORK

This depends on your profession - if you work in an office/ non-strenuous job 3 days - 1 week. If you have a physically demanding job or work in a dirty environment, this may impact your required time off work. Your specific requirements will be discussed with you individually.

If you require a medical certificate, please email admin@drduncantaylor.com.au.

What Complications May Occur After This Procedure?

GENERAL POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF ANY PROCEDURE

- Bleeding
- Infection at the surgical site
- Allergic reaction to equipment, materials or medication
- Blood clot in your leg or lungs
- Chest infection
- Acute kidney injury

SPECIFIC POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF THIS PROCEDURE

- Wound healing problems - wound has delayed healing and may open up (dehiscence)
- Shape or contour irregularities
- Damage to local structures of the hand or digit, i.e. nerves, vessels or tendons

CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PROCEDURE

- Scars - the wound may need to be made bigger and or skin/tissue taken from another area of the body to repair the defect

How to Prepare for Your Procedure

FASTING

If you are having local anaesthetic only:
You do not need to fast.

If you are having a General Anaesthesia or Sedation (Twilight) Anaesthesia:

You cannot have any food or fluids (including lollies, chewing gum) 6 hours prior to your surgery.

You can have some sips of water only up to 2 hours before your surgery and then nothing after this time.

If you take regular medication, please check with our nurse to see if you should be taking your medication in the lead-up to/on the day of your surgery. Some medications should be withheld.

MORNING OF SURGERY

You will be asked to arrive at the hospital approximately 2 hours prior to your surgery start time. Our Practice Manager will email you your admission information, including time and where to go, 1-2 weeks before your surgery date.

This will not apply if you are an inpatient at the hospital already.

Post-Operative Instructions

ACTIVITY

You can get up and move the same day after your surgery after recovering from your general anaesthetic. You can not drive for 24 hours after a General Anaesthetic or sedation, and you will need someone staying in the same house with you the night of your surgery if you are going home the same day.

PAIN RELIEF

You should not be in significant pain after your surgery. Your anaesthetist will prescribe regular pain relief to take on the ward post-surgery. If you have pain on top of this, you should ask for additional pain medication,

which will be prescribed on your drug chart should you need it.

You will not be discharged from the hospital until your pain is well managed on oral medications. Please take paracetamol regularly and your stronger pain relief, if required. If you have severe pain that is not responding to the pain relief, please phone our nurse during office hours.

Please do not put ice packs on your wounds.

Do not take aspirin.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES

You may be prescribed some anti-inflammatories. Please take the entire course, even if you are not in pain. Please take this medication as prescribed on the box by your anaesthetist.

You can take ibuprofen if you have not been prescribed any anti-inflammatories.

Please keep your hand elevated as much as possible in the first week after surgery.

ANTIBIOTICS

In most cases, you will be prescribed a 5 or 7 day course of oral antibiotics. Please take the full course if they are prescribed.

BLEEDING

If the wound starts to bleed, please apply firm pressure for 15 minutes. If a dressing is in place, please do this over the top of the dressing (do not remove the dressing).

This should control the bleeding. However, if it is not easily controlled or does not subside, please phone our nurse specialist during working hours, go to an after-hours GP clinic or visit an emergency department.

INFECTION

If your wound becomes hot, swollen, oozes pus, or you are spiking temperatures, the wound may be infected. Please phone our nurse immediately within business hours or attend your GP, after-hours GP or Emergency.

WOUND & DRESSING CARE

If your injury involves soft tissue only, you can expect to have a simple dressing on the injured finger or hand post-operatively.

If your injury involves any other structures (including bone or tendons), you may have a plaster slab on your arm post-operatively. This plaster will be removed approximately 1 week post-operatively and replaced with a thermoplastic splint by a hand therapist.

Please avoid getting your dressings wet and leave them intact until you are seen in the nurse dressings clinic. You may need to tape a plastic bag around your hand/arm when in the shower.

REMOVAL OF SUTURES AND WIRES

Depending on the wound, any sutures that require removal will be done at your nurse clinic appointment. This will be between 1 - 3 weeks post-operatively.

If you have had K-wires inserted, these will be removed after 4 – 6 weeks. The nurse or practice manager will liaise with you to book this surgery. This can be done under local anaesthetic or general anaesthetic if you would prefer.

HAND THERAPY

Our clinic nurse will refer you to a hand therapist if required. The hand therapist will work with you to strengthen your injured hand, educate you on how to massage scars to attempt to prevent scar tissue from affecting movement and provide you with a protective splint if required.

Follow-Up

Dr Taylor will be in contact with the nurses looking after you on the ward. If you are well post-op he will discharge you after speaking with your nurse over the phone. He will only come in to see you on the ward if you are having any issues. Our nurse will phone you a day or 2 after your discharge to check in on you (this call may be after hours).

If you are concerned at all or have any questions, please phone our clinic to speak with our practice nurse.

Follow up appointments:

- 5-10 days after your procedure, post-surgery wound check in our nurse clinic.
- 6 weeks post-surgery review in Dr Duncan Taylor's day clinic.

If you have any questions please contact us:

Phone (08) 9439 7406 | **Fax** 08 6266 3751

Email admin@drduncantaylor.com.au

Healthlink DMTaylor

Rooms 106 Outram Street, West Perth, WA, 6005

For more information visit drduncantaylor.com.au