

Preparing for your Hand and Wrist Surgery

fremontorthodocs.com



Preparations prior to your procedure

- **Obtain preoperative labs, xrays, EKGs, and medical clearance** as advised by your surgeon or other physician. These diagnostic tests are typically performed at Sage West Lander or Riverton.
- **Discontinue use of aspirin and NSAIDs** (ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, naproxen, Aleve) 10 days before your planned surgery. These medications may cause increased bleeding during the operation or postoperative period. If aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin or another blood-thinning drug is prescribed for a specific health condition, please discuss with your physician. There are exceptions to this guideline, so please ask if you are unsure. Often, you may resume taking these medications the first day following surgery.
- **Decrease smoking/nicotine use.** Smoking and nicotine use impair postoperative healing and increase risks of various complications related to surgery and anesthesia.

Arrangements for the day of surgery

- Sage West surgery department should contact you the day before your surgery to confirm the time of your procedure and when you are expected to arrive at the hospital. If you have not heard from the surgical staff by 3PM on the day preceding your procedure, please contact Fremont Orthopaedics.
- **Nothing to eat or drink past midnight the evening prior to surgery**, unless advised otherwise. You may take daily medications with sips of water only.
- **Diabetic patients:** please do not take insulin or oral hypoglycemic medications the morning of surgery.



- Shower or bathe with a gentle soap the night before or morning of your surgery. Avoid harsh scrubbing and do not get splints or casts wet.
- **DO NOT SHAVE** the arm or hand that will be operated on.
- Wear glasses rather than contacts; leave jewelry and valuables at home.
- Patients are typically discharged home after surgery. **You will NOT be allowed to drive. A responsible adult must be able to drive you home and accompany you through the night after surgery.**
- You will have the opportunity to discuss your procedure with your surgeon both before and after the surgery. It is preferable that the adult who will serve as your primary caregiver accompanies you to the hospital the day of surgery so that the surgeon can communicate operative results and plan for follow up care effectively. This person will also need to participate in discharge teaching by the surgery staff. Most patients have impaired memory of the postoperative time.
- You may receive a prescription for medication. This prescription can be filled by the adult accompanying you while you are in the OR.

Continued on back.



Anticipating your rehabilitation needs after surgery

- You will be able to eat and drink what you feel like after surgery. We recommend that you start “little and light” as the anesthesia medications may cause your stomach to be upset. If you are tolerating light foods well you may progress to eating whatever feels good.
- If your surgery is for carpal tunnel, trigger finger, DeQuervain’s tenosynovitis, or other soft-tissue procedures, your surgical incision will likely need to be covered with dressings for 2-3 days. Your surgeon will give you specific instructions regarding this on the day of surgery.
- After your dressings are removed, your incisions need to be kept clean and dry. You may shower and wash your hands, **but do not immerse hands in water by soaking in dishwasher, bathtubs, swimming pools, or hot tubs** until after your first follow-up clinic visit.
- Some hand procedures will require the patient to wear a splint after surgery.

Your surgeon will inform you if a splint is anticipated. If a splint is needed, it will need to be left in place after surgery and should not be removed, unless you are specifically advised otherwise.

- Icing and elevation of your operative hand will help with postoperative pain and healing. **Apply ice to your surgical site for 30 minutes, three times daily.** Wrap gel ice packs or bags of crushed ice in a clean towel; never apply ice to bare skin. Use pillows to elevate your hand above the level of your heart as often as possible. If comfortable, it is also helpful to sleep with your hand in an elevated position.
- You will be advised to avoid lifting or carrying things using your operative hand.
- **It is important to begin working on finger range of motion immediately after surgery.** Several times a day you should practice bending and straightening fingers, working towards making a fist. Also, practice touching each fingertip to the thumb.
- Most patients are able to return to work as early as 1-3 days following surgery. However, you will need to

continue to observe your activity and incision precautions as described above. During the entire time you are taking narcotic medication you should not drive, drink alcohol, or be responsible for tasks that require judgment, coordination, insight, or short term memory, i.e. operating heavy power machinery, childcare, legal/financial decision making.

- You will see the surgeon for **your first postoperative appointment 1.5-2 weeks following surgery.** Fremont Orthopaedics will schedule your follow up appointment prior to your surgery. If you do not receive a follow-up appointment, please ask the staff to schedule one for you.

Questions or Concerns:

Should you develop any new health issues prior to your surgery or if you have further questions or concerns, please call Fremont Orthopaedics at (307)332-9720.

Dr. Cory J. Lamblin
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Dr. Ben S. Francisco
Orthopaedic Surgeon