



# After Your Ulnar Nerve Subcutaneous Transposition Surgery

*Self-care and follow-up*

This handout explains follow-up care after ulnar nerve subcutaneous transposition surgery.

If your incision is red or there is drainage coming from it, call us right away at the phone numbers listed on the next page. Go to the emergency room if this occurs at night or on a weekend.

## Wound Care

- After surgery, your arm will be placed in a bulky soft dressing (bandage) that goes from your hand to above your elbow. This dressing helps protect your incision site and lessens swelling. Keep the dressing covered with a plastic bag when you shower. You can remove this dressing **5 days** after surgery.
- After you remove the dressing, keep your wound covered with 4-inch by 4-inch gauze pads and an ACE bandage. Change the gauze every day, or sooner if it gets wet or dirty.

## Pain Management

- You will receive a prescription for narcotic pain medicine. Take this medicine only if you need it.
- Be sure to talk with the clinic nurse about how to take your pain medicine. To best manage your pain, you must take your pain medicine the way it was prescribed. Taking the correct dose at the right time is very important.
- If you have uncomfortable side effects from the pain medicine, call the nurse at 206-598-4263.
- Please see “Medications After Surgery” for more instructions.

## Driving

- Do **not** drive if you are taking narcotic pain medicine. It is not safe. The medicine can make you sleepy and delay your reaction time.
- Once you are no longer taking the medicine, you may drive as soon as you can comfortably grip the steering wheel with both hands.

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## Questions or Concerns?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Weekdays, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.: Call the Hand Center at **206-598-4263**.

After office hours and on weekends and holidays: Call the hospital operator at **206-598-6190**. Ask for the Hand Fellow on call to be paged. Your call will be returned.

For more information, please visit the Hand Center online at [www.uwhand.com](http://www.uwhand.com).

## Activity

- Move your fingers often to help prevent stiffness. Try to bend and straighten your elbow, wrist, and fingers completely 5 or 6 times every day, right after surgery.
- Because you will not be using your arm for your everyday activities, you will need to move your shoulder to prevent stiffness. To do this, raise your arm overhead many times a day.
- Do **not** lift or use any object heavier than a full soda can (about 1 pound or .45 kilogram) until your sutures (stitches) have been removed.
- You may do some typing or writing right after surgery, but this may be difficult for 3 to 4 weeks because of swelling.
- Elevate your hand as much as possible to lessen swelling, pain, and stiffness.

## Follow-up

When you leave the surgery center, you should have a follow-up appointment at **Roosevelt Hand Therapy or Eastside Specialty Clinic in Bellevue** already set for 10 to 14 days after surgery. At this visit:

- Your sutures will be removed.
- Your surgeon will see you.
- Your hand therapist will teach you exercises to help increase the range of motion of your elbow and wrist. You will also do exercises to help strengthen your hand.

## Results

Most patients who have ulnar nerve subcutaneous transposition surgery regain full use of their hand, wrist, and elbow. It may take 4 or 5 months to regain full strength. Some of the numbness in your hand may not completely go away.

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