



After Your Thumb Collateral Ligament Repair Surgery

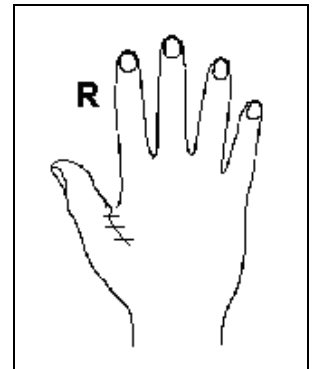
Self-care and follow-up

This handout explains follow-up care after surgery to repair your thumb collateral ligament.

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 hand and wrist will be placed in a bulky dressing with a splint. This splint helps protect the repaired ligament and lessens swelling.
- You must keep your splint clean and dry until you come to the Hand Center for your follow-up visit. This will be 10 to 14 days after surgery.
- When you shower, cover the splint with a plastic bag to keep it dry.
- Elevate your hand as much as possible to lessen swelling and pain.



The incision site on a right hand.

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.

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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.

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.

Activity

- You can use your hand for daily tasks such as getting dressed, typing, combing your hair, preparing food, and other light activities.
- Do **not** lift anything heavier than a full soda can (about 1 pound or .45 kilogram) until your sutures have been removed.

Follow-up

When you leave the surgery center, you should have a follow-up appointment in the Hand Center already set for 10 to 14 days after surgery. At this visit:

- Your sutures will be removed.
- We will place your hand either in a cast or in a brace that can be removed **only** for showers or therapy. The cast or brace will cover your thumb. You must wear this for about 4 more weeks.
- If you receive a brace, you will start occupational therapy to help you learn how to start moving your thumb again.
- After 3 months, you will begin exercises to increase strength in your thumb and hand.

Results

Most patients who have thumb collateral ligament repair surgery regain full use of their hand. It is normal for your thumb to be stiff after surgery. This usually improves after doing hand therapy. Most patients regain full strength in their thumb.

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