



# Finger Joint Fusion

## Patient Postoperative Instructions

### Laith Al-Shihabi, MD

#### **0-2 weeks**

##### Post-op Dressings:

- Keep the dressings and splint in place until your first postoperative visit.
- Elevation of the hand, along with ice on-and-off for 20 minutes at a time, will help with swelling and pain.
- It is ok to shower, but the dressings must stay clean and dry. Place a waterproof covering over the dressings while bathing or showering (such as a heavy plastic bag that is sealed with Saran wrap).
- If the dressings get dirty, wet, or come apart please contact the office to have the dressing re-done.

##### Motion:

- Start moving your fingers and thumb that are not in the splint as soon as possible.
- Also work on moving your palm up (supination) and palm down (pronation), along with flexing and extending your wrist.
- You can use the un-splinted fingers of your hand for light activity, such as eating, drinking, or using a computer.
- Do not lift, carry, push, or pull anything heavier than a glass of water or can of soda.

#### **2-6 weeks (First post-op visit)**

##### Splint:

- The postoperative splint and sutures will be removed at your 2-week visit.
- You can begin gentle scar massage at this time.
- You will be placed in to a removable finger- or hand-based splint by your hand therapist to be worn at all times apart from hand therapy

##### Motion:

- Therapy will be started to focus on recovery of motion to the surrounding joints.
- Continue to avoid lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling objects heavier than a glass of water.

#### **6-12 weeks (Second post-op visit)**

##### Splint:

- The splint will be continued full-time until the 6 week mark, but may be cut back to allow motion of neighboring joints.
- Continue wearing the splint with any heavier or painful activity.

##### Motion:

- Continue finger, forearm, and wrist range of motion.
- Begin gentle finger strengthening using putty.
- You can lift/carry up to 5lbs (about 1/2 gallon of milk) as your symptoms allow at 8 weeks.
- You can lift/carry up to 10-15 lbs starting at 10 weeks.

#### **12+ weeks (Third post-op visit)**

##### Splint:

- Wean from the splint, so that you are no longer using it by 12 weeks after surgery.

##### Motion:

- Continue finger strengthening as needed.
- Transition to a home exercise program.
- There are no further activity restrictions after 12 weeks unless otherwise discussed on a case-by-case basis.