

Immediately After Surgery:

- Elevate the extremity and move fingers frequently, making a gentle fist, to reduce swelling and stiffness.
- Keep your bandage clean, dry, and intact until your first post-operative visit. You can purchase a cast seal to place over the bandage to keep it from getting wet while showering.
- You will likely have a regional block (nerve block) performed at the time of your surgery. This will numb your arm for about 18-24 hours after surgery and be helpful with pain control.
- Refrain from lifting anything greater than 2 lbs (about the weight of a cup of coffee), or any vigorous squeezing, gripping, etc. with your operative hand.

First Post-Operative Visit (10-14 days after surgery):

- Your bandage and sutures will be removed in the office.
- X-rays will be taken in the office.
- You will be provided with a referral for a custom molded splint. The splint should be worn at all times except for hygiene purposes and gentle range of motion exercises.
- The surgical site may now be washed with soap and water in the shower. Avoid soaking or submerging your arm under water for the next 2 weeks (dishes, pools, hot tubs, etc.)
- Depending upon your progress, you may be provided with a referral for formal therapy; this will assist with regaining range of motion and addressing swelling. The fingers have the tendency to get very stiff, so it is important to be compliant with exercises under the direction of your therapist.
- After 1 additional week, you may begin performing scar massage. You can massage Vitamin E oil/lotion into the incision site; this will help with scar sensitivity, which is normal in about 10% of patients.
- Continue to avoid any heavy lifting, gripping, or squeezing.

Second Post-Operative Visit (5-6 weeks after surgery):

- X-rays will be taken in the office.
- Continue with use of the splint while out and about, though this may be removed while at home.
- Begin/Continue formal occupational therapy.
- You may begin to increase use of your affected arm but should still avoid heavy lifting (greater than about 5 lbs) or impact to the affected hand.

Third Postoperative Visit (10-12 weeks after surgery):

- X-rays will be taken in the office (in some circumstances, a CT scan may be ordered to confirm the fusion has fully healed).
- Continue therapy with an emphasis on strengthening.
- Expected full recovery is about 3-4 months after surgery.