

Instructions after Needle Fasciotomy



Thank you for choosing to have your surgery at Melbourne Hand Surgery. This page tells you what to do, what not to do and what you can expect after your needle fasciotomy.

- Keep your hand elevated at or above the level of your heart for 2 days. This speeds your healing and reduces swelling and discomfort. Applying a cold pack (or a bag of frozen peas) regularly while you are awake during the first 2 days will further reduce swelling and discomfort.
- The local anaesthetic that has been injected will last for 1-2 hours. If you have pain or discomfort please take paracetamol (eg "Panadol") and/or ibuprofen (eg "Nurofen") as directed by the instructions on the packet. You can buy these medications over the counter at supermarkets and pharmacies. If you have minimal discomfort you do not need to take these medications. Do not drive until the local anaesthetic has worn off and your hand is comfortable.
- Please leave the band-aid dressings on for at least 12 hours. After this you can remove them and wash your hand normally.
- It is unusual to have a skin tear from a needle fasciotomy. If you have one we will ask you to keep reapplying a dressing on that area until it has healed. During this time you can remove the dressing daily, wash your hand normally in clean running water, then replace the dressing.
- If a thin stretchy wrap ("coban") has been applied to your finger you are allowed to get this wet and then pat or squeeze it dry with a towel. Please try to leave the finger wrap on for 7 days. Please take the fabric bandage ("tubigrip") off your hand and wrist before showering or washing, but otherwise keep it on for one day.
- We encourage you to bend and straighten the joints in your hands and fingers as this speeds recovery. Avoid activities that require using a strong grip during the first week. For example, don't play tennis or golf, and don't dig with a shovel.
- Do not smoke. Smoking reduces blood flow to the fingers by 42% and impairs healing.
- You can reduce the risk of infection by keeping your hand clean for the first 48 hours. During this time we ask that you avoid gardening, changing baby nappies and cleaning the toilet. You do not have to be overly cautious, just be sensible. Wear a glove to cover your hand when you need to.
- See a hand therapist as we have recommended so that you can have a splint custom-made for your hand. Please wear this splint at night for 3 months. The splint is designed to hold your hand straight, so that the Dupuytren's contracture is less likely to recur early. If you have had a finger joint treated we may also recommend a spring-loaded finger splint to wear during the day when you are able.
- After 2 days please begin to massage the treated area firmly at least twice a day using a good quality hand cream. Gently stretching your fingers backwards will help to maximise the results of the procedure.
- We will schedule a 10 minute review with Dr Tomlinson 2 weeks after the procedure, 6 weeks after the procedure and 12 weeks after the procedure. If you require further cortisone injections these will be administered at the 6 week review and/or the 12 week review.

If you need to contact us during business hours please phone 9427 9596. If you need to contact Dr Tomlinson urgently after hours please phone Epworth Hospital Switchboard on 9426 6666 and ask to be put through to Dr Jill Tomlinson on her mobile phone, or call 0467 666 862.