
Hand and Upper Extremity Clinic

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Ganglion Cyst Excision Surgery **Post Surgery Information and Care**

After a ganglion cyst excision, keep the incision dry and clean, use ice and elevation to manage swelling, and follow your doctor's instructions on when to remove dressings and splints. Be sure to perform prescribed finger and hand movements to prevent stiffness and avoid heavy lifting or submerging the wound in water until cleared by your physician.

Wound and dressing care

- Keep the initial dressing and splint clean and dry for the first 24 hours to 7 days, as instructed by your doctor. You may cover it during showers to keep it dry.
- After the initial period, you can remove the bulky dressing and splint (or as instructed at your first post-op visit).
- Gently wash the incision with clean water and pat it dry daily. Do not use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol, as they can slow healing.
- It is okay to have a small amount of dried blood or for the small steri-strips (skin tape) to fall off.
- Only apply ointments, lotions, or creams to the incision after your first post-operative visit.
- Do not submerge the hand in water (e.g., baths, pools, hot tubs) until your sutures are removed and the wound is fully healed, which can be up to 3 weeks.

Pain management and swelling

- Use ice packs for up to 20 minutes at a time to help with swelling and pain. Place a thin cloth between the ice pack and your skin.
- Elevate your hand above your shoulder level whenever possible to help reduce swelling.
- Take over-the-counter pain relievers like Tylenol or ibuprofen as directed, and be sure not to exceed the recommended dosage.
- Narcotics should only be used as needed for additional pain control and may cause constipation, so be prepared to use a stool softener if directed.

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Activity and exercise

- Gently move your fingers and thumb throughout the day as tolerated to prevent stiffness, even while the splint is on.
- For the first 1 to 2 weeks, avoid lifting more than 4 to 8 pounds.
- Heavy lifting and impact activities should be avoided for several weeks.
- When you are able to drive safely and are no longer taking narcotic pain medication, you may resume driving.

When to contact your doctor

- Contact your doctor if you experience signs of infection such as a fever (over 101°F), chills, increased redness, or continuous drainage from the incision.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you have unrelenting pain or difficulty breathing.