
Hand and Upper Extremity Clinic

Brian A. Janz MD

Carolina Johnson PA-C

Theresa (Terri) Nye

Orthopaedic Associates of Central Maryland (OACM) A member of the Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics (CAO)

910 Frederick Rd.
Catonsville, MD 21228
410-644-1880

www.mdbonedocs.com

www.DrJanz.com

Thumb Basilar Joint Arthroplasty **Post Surgery Information and Care**

After a basilar joint suspensionplasty, keep the operated hand elevated and apply ice for the first 72 hours to manage swelling and pain, while following all activity restrictions and keeping the dressing clean and dry. Do not lift or perform forceful activities with the operated hand until cleared by your surgeon. Physical therapy, usually starting around two weeks post-surgery, is critical for recovery and involves a staged progression of exercises to restore range of motion and strength.

Immediate post-operative care (first 72 hours)

Elevation:

Keep your arm elevated above heart level as much as possible to reduce swelling. Use pillows to prop your arm up while sleeping or sitting.

Ice:

Apply an ice pack for 20-30 minutes at a time to the surgical dressing to help with pain and swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the skin and place a thin cloth between the ice pack and the dressing.

Movement:

Wiggle the exposed part of your thumb and gently make a fist and straighten your other fingers to help with swelling and prevent stiffness.

Activity restrictions:

Do not lift or do anything forceful with your operated hand. Avoid alcohol, driving, and operating machinery for the first 24 hours.

Dressing:

Keep the initial dressing clean and dry. Protect it with a plastic bag when showering.

Hand and Upper Extremity Clinic

Brian A. Janz MD

Carolina Johnson PA-C

Theresa (Terri) Nye

Follow-up appointments:

You will have follow-up appointments to have your initial splint and sutures removed.

Splinting:

After the initial splint, you will likely be fitted for a new splint or a neoprene sleeve that you will need to wear for an extended period, as directed by your doctor.

Physical therapy:

Hand therapy will likely begin around two weeks post-surgery to guide you through the recovery process. Therapy involves a gradual progression from light range-of-motion exercises to strengthening exercises.

Pain management:

Take pain medication as prescribed. You may switch to over-the-counter pain relievers, like ibuprofen, as directed.

Long-term recovery and return to activity

Gradual return to activity:

You will be able to return to normal daily activities around three months after surgery, but it may take longer to regain full strength.

Be patient:

It can take six months to a year for your arm to regain its full strength, and you will be guided by your surgeon and therapist on when it's safe to return to more strenuous activities.

When to contact your doctor

Increased drainage, redness, or swelling that doesn't improve with elevation and ice

Foul odor from the incision

Fever greater than 101°F

Fingers become cold, numb, or change to a pale or bluish color