
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

Metacarpal Fracture ORIF Surgery Post Surgery Information and Care

After a metacarpal fracture ORIF, it's crucial to keep the splint clean and dry, elevate the hand above heart level to reduce swelling, and follow your doctor's instructions on prescribed pain medication and wound care. You will likely begin gentle finger and wrist range of motion exercises and physical therapy once your doctor removes the initial splint, while avoiding heavy lifting (generally over 5 pounds) for several weeks. Follow all specific instructions from your surgeon, and contact them if you experience signs of infection or other complications. Immediate care (first few days)

- **Elevation:** Keep your hand elevated above the level of your heart to minimize swelling. A sling can help with this.
- **Ice:** Apply ice packs as directed, but avoid placing them directly on the skin for prolonged periods.
- **Pain medication:** Take prescribed pain medication as directed. Be aware it can cause constipation and may need to be weaned as pain subsides.
- **Splint and dressing:** Keep the splint and dressing clean and dry at all times.
- **Showering:** You can shower, but protect the splint with a plastic bag or cover. Pat the incision area dry gently after showering.

Activity and exercise

- **Motion:** Your doctor will advise on when you can start moving your fingers. Begin with gentle motion as allowed by the splint, unless you have pins, in which case you may need to avoid moving the injured fingers until instructed.
- **Light activity:** You can use your hand for light activities like eating, dressing, and typing once your doctor says it's okay, but avoid any heavy lifting.
- **Heavy lifting:** Avoid any activity that involves lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling objects heavier than a glass of water or can of soda for the first several weeks. The weight restriction increases over time as you heal.

Hand and Upper Extremity Clinic

Brian A. Janz MD

Carolina Johnson PA-C

Theresa (Terri) Nye

Long-term recovery and follow-up

- **Follow-up appointments:** Attend all scheduled follow-up appointments to have your splint removed, stitches out, and your progress monitored.
- **Physical therapy:** Follow the physical therapy plan recommended by your therapist to regain strength and function. This typically starts several weeks after surgery.
- **Incision care:** Do not apply any ointments, oils, or other products to the incision until it is completely healed.
- **Bathing:** Avoid soaking the incision in a bathtub, swimming pool, or ocean until your doctor says it's safe, which is often around 6 weeks.

When to contact your doctor

- Increased redness, swelling, or drainage from the incision
- Foul odor from the wound
- Fever greater than 101°F
- Fingers become cold, numb, or have a bluish color
- Sudden calf pain, shortness of breath, or chest pain