

## Hand Tendon Repair before Your Surgery

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During the surgery, the doctor will make a cut (incision) in the skin on the side of your wrist near the base of your thumb. He or she will make a cut to open the tight band over the swollen part of the tendon. This will allow the tendon to move freely without pain. The doctor will close the skin incision with stitches. You will have a scar on the side of your wrist that will fade with time.

You will go home on the same day as the surgery.

### **How do you prepare for surgery?**

Surgery can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for surgery.



#### **Preparing for surgery**

- Be sure you have someone to take you home. Anesthesia and pain medicine will make it unsafe for you to drive or get home on your own.
- Understand exactly what surgery is planned, along with the risks, benefits, and other options.
- If you take aspirin or some other blood thinner, ask your doctor if you should stop taking it before your surgery. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do. These medicines increase the risk of bleeding.
- Tell your doctor ALL the medicines and natural health products you take. Some may increase the risk of problems during your surgery. Your doctor will tell you if you should stop taking any of them before the surgery and how soon to do it.
- Make sure your doctor and the hospital have a copy of your goals of care plan. It lets others know your health care wishes. It's a good thing to have before any type of surgery or procedure.

Having surgery can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect and how to safely prepare for surgery.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to

#### **Plan Ahead**

- **Plan a ride home.** Ask a family member or friend to bring you home after your hospital visit and stay with you for 24 hours.

- **Plan for meals.** Good nutrition is important for your recovery, but cooking may be harder to do right after you get home. Prepare and freeze meals before your surgery or ask friends and family to help you cook or shop for groceries.
- **Get help with chores.** After you get home you may need help. For a short time after your surgery, you may be told to avoid certain physical activities. Plan ahead and arrange to have some help with chores after your surgery.
- **Buy gum or hard candies.** Chewing gum and sucking on hard candies may help get your bowels moving after surgery.

#### **Be as healthy as possible**

- **Be active.** Being active before surgery will make it easier for you to be active after surgery. If you're normally active, keep doing your regular activities up to the day of your surgery. If you aren't used to exercising, start slowly. You can start by going for 15 minute walks.
- **Eat healthy.** Eating healthy foods will give your body the nutrients it needs to prepare for and handle the surgery. Eat healthy foods and drink enough fluids in the weeks before your surgery. Your healthcare team will tell you how long before surgery that you need to stop eating and drinking.
- **Manage your medical conditions.** If you have other medical conditions, such as anemia or high or low blood sugar, ask your healthcare team what you need to do to prepare for surgery.
- **Quit tobacco.** You can heal faster and prevent lung problems after surgery if you quit tobacco. Aim to quit smoking and using tobacco and tobacco-like products at least 4 weeks before surgery. Talk to your healthcare team about ways to quit or cut back.
- **Don't drink alcohol 24 hours before surgery.** Alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs may interact with medicines you take before and after surgery. Talk to your healthcare team if you need help stopping or cutting back on alcohol, cannabis, or other drugs.

#### **Do the following before your surgery to help you feel better sooner and recover faster.**

##### **The day before surgery**

- Know the time of your surgery, when you need to be at the hospital, and where you need to go when you get there.
- Follow any instructions the healthcare team or your surgeon gave you for your medicines (including herbal or complementary medicines).
- Don't drink alcohol 24 hours before your surgery.



- **Stop** eating 8 hours before surgery. This is very important!



- Stop eating and drinking all non-clear fluids 8 hours before surgery. This is very important
- You may DRINK CLEAR FLUIDS ONLY up to 3 hours before surgery. This includes BLACK coffee, tea, Gatorade, apple juice and water.

### **Morning of surgery**

Plan to arrive at the hospital on time.

- Follow any instructions provided
- Bring all of the things you packed for your hospital stay **if** you are being admitted.
- Follow **all** other instructions the healthcare team gave you to prepare for surgery.
- Bring your CPAP if you use one



### **What happens on the day of surgery?**

- If your doctor has instructed you to take your medicines on the day of surgery, please do so using only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your surgery. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Remove all jewelry, piercings, and contact lenses.
- Leave your valuables at home.

### **At the hospital**



Bring a picture ID Health Card

- Before surgery you will be asked to repeat your full name, what surgery you are having, and what part of your body is being operated on. The area for surgery may be marked.
- As you wake up in the recovery room, the nurse will check to be sure you are stable and comfortable. It is important for you to tell your doctor and nurse how you feel and ask questions about any concerns you may have.
- After surgery, you will have a thick bandage on your hand and wrist. You may not be able to bend your wrist.
- You may have a splint on your hand.

### **When should you call your doctor?**

- You have questions or concerns.
- You don't understand how to prepare for your surgery.
- You become ill before the surgery (such as fever, flu, or a cold).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the surgery.

## What to Expect at Home

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### Your Recovery

Tendon release is surgery to reduce pressure on a tendon that runs along the side of the wrist near the thumb. The doctor made a cut, called an incision, in the skin on the side of your wrist near the base of your thumb. The surgery opens the tissue over the swollen part of the tendon. This allows the tendon to move freely without pain.

Your wrist and thumb will be sore and swollen at first. You may feel numbness or tingling near the incision. This feeling will probably start to get better in a few days, but it may take several months to go away. Your doctor will take out your stitches 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. Your doctor or your physiotherapist or occupational therapist may recommend that you wear a splint on your hand for 1 to 4 weeks after surgery.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.

### How can you care for yourself at home?



#### Activity

- Rest when you feel tired. Getting enough sleep will help you recover.
- Try to walk each day. Start by walking a little more than you did the day before. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk.
- For 1 to 2 weeks after surgery, avoid using your hand. This includes lifting things heavier than 0.5 to 1 kilogram or doing repeated arm or hand movements, such as typing, using a computer mouse, washing windows, vacuuming, or chopping food
- You may shower 24 to 48 hours after surgery, but do not get your hand wet until your doctor says it is okay. Keep the bandage dry by covering it with plastic. Do not take a bath, swim, use a hot tub, or soak your hand until your doctor says it is okay.



**Diet** Start light with soup toast and tea. Avoid fatty foods and dairy as this

may upset your stomach.



## Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when you can restart your medicines. He or she will also give you instructions about taking any new medicines.
- If you take aspirin or some other blood thinner, ask your doctor if and when to start taking it again. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
- If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
- If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.



## Incision care

- Leave the bandage on your hand until your doctor says it is okay to remove it.
- After your doctor says you can take off your bandage, wash the area daily with warm, soapy water, and pat it dry. Don't use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol, which can slow healing. You may cover the area with a gauze bandage if it weeps or rubs against clothing. Change the bandage every day.
- Keep the area clean and dry.



## Exercise

- Gently bend and straighten your fingers throughout the day to keep them flexible and help reduce swelling.
- You may need wrist and hand therapy. This can help you regain movement, strength, and grip in your wrist and hand. To get the best results, you need to do the exercises correctly and as often and as long as your doctor or your physiotherapist or occupational therapist tells you to.



## Ice and elevation

- Put ice or a cold pack on your hand and wrist for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Try to do this every 1 to 2 hours for the next 3 days (when you are awake) or until the swelling goes down. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Prop up your wrist on a pillow anytime you sit or lie down for the first 2 or 3 days. Try to keep your wrist above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.

- Wear a sling to support your hand, if directed by your doctor. Make sure to move your arm and shoulder often if you wear a sling. This will help prevent your elbow and shoulder from getting stiff.

## **Discharge**

### **How you may feel after your operation**

- You may feel nauseated, light headed dizzy or sleepy for up to 24 hours after your surgery
- You may have a slight temperature for 2 days
- You may feel tired for a few days after your surgery

**For 24 hours after your surgery do not....**

- Drive a vehicle
- Operate heavy equipment
- Drink alcohol or smoke
- Make any important or legal decisions

## **At Home**

Slowly get more active.

- Eat healthy and drink fluids as you did before surgery (unless your healthcare team gives you other instructions).
- Drink oral nutritional supplements (like Ensure Protein Max) for the first month after surgery to give you extra protein and help you heal faster.
- Take less pain medicine as your pain gets better.
- Take your blood thinner and other medicines as you were told.

## **What is anesthesia?**

Anesthesia controls pain. And it keeps all your organs working normally during surgery or another kind of procedure.

Anesthesia can relax you. It can also make you sleepy or forgetful. Or it may make you unconscious. It depends on what kind you get.

Your anesthesia provider (anesthesiologist) will make sure you are comfortable and safe during the procedure or surgery.

There are different types of anesthesia.

- **Local anesthesia.** This type numbs a small part of the body. Doctors use it for simple procedures.

- You get a shot in the area the doctor will work on.
- You will feel some pressure during the procedure.
- You may stay awake. Or you may get medicine to help you relax or sleep.
- **Regional anesthesia.** This type blocks pain to a larger area of the body. It can also help relieve pain right after surgery. And it may reduce your need for other pain medicine after surgery. There are different types. They include:
  - Peripheral nerve block. This is a shot near a specific nerve or group of nerves. It blocks pain in the part of the body supplied by the nerve. This is often used for procedures on the hands, arms, feet, legs, or face.
  - Epidural and spinal anesthesia. This is a shot near the spinal cord and the nerves around it. It blocks pain from an entire area of the body, such as the belly, hips, or legs.
- **General anesthesia.** This type affects the brain and the whole body. You may get it through a small tube placed in a vein (IV). You are unconscious and will not feel pain. During the surgery, you will be comfortable. Later, you will not remember much about the surgery.

What type will you have?

The type of anesthesia you have depends on many things, such as:

- The type of surgery or procedure and the reason you are having it.
- Test results, such as blood tests.
- How worried you feel about the surgery.
- Your health. Your doctor and nurses will ask you about any past surgeries. They will ask about any health problems you may have, such as diabetes, lung or heart disease, or a history of stroke. They will want to know if you take medicine, such as blood thinners. Your doctor may also ask if any family members have had any problems with anesthesia. You will talk with your anesthesia provider about your options. In many cases, you may be able to choose the type of anesthesia you have.

What can you expect after having anesthesia?

Right after the surgery, you will be in the recovery room. Nurses will make sure you are comfortable. As the anesthesia wears off, you may feel some pain and discomfort from your surgery.

Tell someone if you have pain. Pain medicine works better if you take it before the pain gets bad.

You may feel some of the effects of anesthesia for a while. It takes time for the effects of the medicine to completely wear off.

- If you had local or regional anesthesia you may feel numb and have less feeling in part of your body. It may also take a few hours for you to be able to move and control your muscles as usual.
- When you first wake up from general anesthesia, you may be confused. Or it may be hard to think clearly. This is normal.
- Don't do anything for 24 hours that requires attention to detail. This includes going to work, making important decisions, or signing any legal documents.

Other common side effects of anesthesia include:

- Nausea and vomiting. This does not usually last long. It can be treated with medicine.
- A slight drop in body temperature. You may feel cold and shiver when you first wake up.
- A sore throat, if you had general anesthesia.
- Muscle aches or weakness.
- Feeling tired.

You may go home the same day of surgery or you may stay in the hospital. Your doctor will check on your recovery from the anesthesia. He or she will answer any questions you may have.

For answers to frequently asked questions about your anesthetic, please visit

<https://www.cas.ca/en/about-cas/advocacy/anesthesia-faq>



### **When should you call for help?**

**Call 911** anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have chest pain, are short of breath, or cough up blood.

**Call your doctor** or seek immediate medical care if:

- Bright red blood has soaked through the bandage over your incision.
- You have signs of infection, such as:
  - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
  - Red streaks leading from the incision.
  - Pus draining from the incision.
  - A fever.
- You cannot move your fingers.



