

Thumb Ligament Repair

Home Care Instructions

You have undergone surgery to fix the ligaments in your thumb. Ligament reconstruction happens because a torn ligament cannot fully heal itself. But with good healing and physical therapy, most patients regain all or most of their function. I ask that you try and adhere to the below recommendations to maximize the outcome you deserve.

-Dr. Michael C. Russonella

- Splint** You will be placed in a thumb spica cast after surgery for about four weeks. I might take the spica cast off at four weeks and then place your thumb in an immobilizing splint for another two weeks.
- Diet** Start out with liquids and progress to your regular diet as tolerated.
- Activity** No strenuous activities until surgically cleared. You can begin to start other normal daily activities as you feel more comfortable. However, you may not use your hand until told do to so. It is advisable to get up and “move around” is much as you can tolerate after surgery, as doing so helps prevent blood clots. Let the pain be your guide.
- Pain Medication** You will be given a prescription for narcotic pain medicine before you leave the hospital. Take this medication only if you need to relieve severe pain. Only take one pill every four hours. If your pain is not relieved by one pill, you may take two pills at your next dose. You may also use an over-the-counter medicine if you choose. Use caution when taking narcotic medications, because they affect your ability to drive and concentrate.
- Wound Care & Showering** Keep your dressings on until your first post-operative visit. Do not change your dressings. Keep all of your dressings clean and dry. Dr. Russonella will tell you when you can remove your dressing. If there are Steri-Strips™ on your wound, leave them alone. You may shower (running water is okay), but do not soak your hand. Do not use a hot tub, bath, or go swimming until the doctor clears you to do so.
- Ice** Ice is an excellent source of relief of pain, swelling, stiffness, and inflammation. Use it as often as 15-20 minutes three times a day. You may continue to use ice several weeks following surgery. **DO NOT USE HEAT!**
- Return Visits** The office will call you to schedule your post-operative appointments.
- Emergency** Dr. Russonella’s staff is available 24 hours a day in case you experience any problems once you leave the hospital. The risk of infection is very low risk. Notify the office if you develop a fever >101°F, with unusual increase in pain, redness, and warmth. Report any pus or unusual drainage to our office immediately. It could be a concern if your incisions swell or have drainage. If you encounter any problems, please call our office.
- ** If you feel chest pain or shortness of breath, please go to the nearest ER for evaluation. Do not call the office or wait for an appointment; although extremely rare, this could be a blood clot in the lungs.****