



Mammoth Orthopedic  
Institute

Mammoth Orthopedic Institute ■ 85 Sierra Park Road ■ Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 ■ 760.924.4084

### POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: CASTING OF METACARPAL FRACTURE

#### ACTIVITY

- You should move (straighten and bend) your fingers in the cast at least 10 times per day within your comfort to decrease swelling and prevent stiffness.
- You may move your shoulder (raise it overhead) and elbow (bend and straighten) within your comfort to decrease swelling and prevent stiffness.
- You may be able to do some typing or writing right after surgery. But, swelling or stiffness may make it hard to do these things for 3 to 4 weeks after surgery.

#### PAIN & INFLAMMATION

- **Ice** - Apply ice bags wrapped in a dry towel several times per day for 20 minutes for the first week and then as needed for pain relief and inflammation.
- **Elevation** - You may notice that your fingers will get swollen if your arm is hanging by your side for long periods of time, therefore keep your arm **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 2 to 3 days.
- **Pain Medication**- You have been given a prescription for pain control; please take as directed.
  - If you think you will require a refill on your medication, you **MUST** do so during our regular **weekday** office hours.
  - If you need additional pain medication you may take Tylenol 500-650mg every 4-6 hours. Do not take more than 3grams or 3000mg in a 24 hour period!
  - Common side effects of the pain medication are:
    - **NAUSEA**: To decrease nausea, take these medications with food.
    - **DROWSINESS**: Do not drive a car or operate machinery.
    - **ITCHING**: You may take Benadryl to alleviate any itching.
    - **CONSTIPATION**: To decrease constipation, use the stool softener provided (Docusate 250mg) or over-the-counter remedies (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc). Also avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, or yogurt...as these foods can make you constipated. Getting up and moving around also helps with constipation and "waking up" your intestinal tract.
- Anti-inflammatory medications (Aleve, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, etc.) should **not** be taken for 2 weeks after surgery.

#### EMERGENCIES

- Please have someone stay with you for the first 24 hours after surgery
- Please call the clinic or the orthopaedist on-call if:
  - Drainage from the incision soaks the dressings, expands, is foul-smelling; or your incisions are red, warm, and extremely painful
  - You develop a fever ( $>101.5^{\circ}$ ) or chills.
  - You experience leg or calf pain, leg swelling, or difficulty breathing.

#### FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Please **schedule a follow-up visit** for suture removal, and to review your surgery 7-10 days postoperatively.
- If not already scheduled, please call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment for xrays in the cast 7 – 10 days after casting procedure. It is important to confirm the fracture has not moved in the cast.
- In most cases you will be converted to a removable splint after 4-6 weeks.
- Do **not** do any weight-lifting or strengthening exercises without talking with your surgeon or hand therapist.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL THE OFFICE (760)924-4084.**

