



## THUMB CMC ARTHROPLASTY POST-OP PROTOCOL

- It is important to protect your surgical repair for best results
- It may take 6 months or more for full pain relief and recovery of strength
- Keep the surgical splint completely clean and dry after surgery
- Keep the hand elevated above the shoulder for the first 3 days as much as possible
- Ice the wrist and front of the elbow for 20 minutes, three to four times a day
- For pain you can take an Oxycodone 5mg tab by mouth every 6-8 hours as needed for severe pain
- Additionally we recommend 650 mg of Tylenol 4 times a day for the first 7 days after surgery
  - Ibuprofen 800 mg (or other anti-inflammatory as tolerated) three times a day after surgery
- When sitting or lying, use pillows to support your operative hand to prevent swelling
- Take 1500 mg of Vitamin C daily for 2 weeks after surgery to improve healing

### Phase I: 0-2 weeks

#### Splint

- Splint/ACE wrap is placed at the time of surgery; keep clean dry at all times until post-op appointment

#### Exercises

- Passive finger/ elbow exercises
  - Use your non-surgical hand to move the surgical fingers for 10 minutes/3 times a day
  - Move the elbow at least 3 times a day
  - NO lifting over 2 lbs with the operative hand

### Phase II: 2-6 weeks

#### Splint

- Your surgical splint will be removed at your first post-op visit at 10 to 14 days
- You will be placed in a rigid thumb brace that includes the wrist and you will begin PT/OT
  - **Splint positions thumb MP joint in 30° of flexion and slight abduction to ensure capsular healing**
  - Wear this splint at all times except when showering or exercising for the first 6 weeks

#### Exercises

- Continue shoulder, elbow and wrist range of motion exercises
- Begin passive ROM of the CMC joint; abduction and extension only
  - Avoid flexion/adduction of the CMC and thumb opposition to protect the dorsal repair of the capsule
- Active motion of the non-surgical digits
- May use putty for strengthening of all digits except thumb
- Ice therapy and gentle massage will help with swelling

# THUMB CMC ARTHROPLASTY POST-OP PROTOCOL

Page 2

## **Phase III: Weeks 6-10**

Xrays at 6 week post-op clinic visit

### **Splint**

- Wear custom splint during the day until 12 weeks post op

### **Exercises**

- Begin active thumb palmar abduction, opposition, and circumduction
  - Begin light isometric thumb adduction; no heavy gripping
  - Work active ROM to reach tip of thumb to base of small finger
  - Light passive stretching to tolerance
  - Light functional activities (buttoning clothes, writing)
- 

## **Phase IV: Weeks 10 – 16**

### **Exercises**

- Progressive strengthening with addition of active thenar adduction and pinch
- Heavier grip exercises are added; may use thumb with putty

### **Restrictions**

- Avoid heavy gripping and repetitive activities such as pruning or weed eating
  - Splint when doing housework or other activities
  - Some patients prefer smaller thumb based splint at this point
- 

## **Phase V: Weeks 24+**

### **Exercises**

- Slow return to activities or work that involve heavy lifting, gripping or vibration
- Full activities if pain free, no swelling or tenderness

### **Restrictions**

- Some patients prefer smaller thumb based splint at this point
- Others use a soft thumb spica splint such as a neoprene Comfort Cool brace