



BOICE-WILLIS CLINIC  
**PLASTIC  
SURGERY**

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**INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR HAND SURGERY**

*Please follow some basic guidelines in order to maximize results and to minimize any risks or complications in your post-operative recovery.*

***Before your surgery:***

- **Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke.** Cigarette smoking impairs wound healing, blood flow, and respiratory secretions. Do **not** use nicotine patch or gum at this time.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Alcohol can be a blood thinner, so we recommend no drinking for two weeks prior to surgery and for two weeks following surgery.
- **Avoid aspirin, aspirin-containing products, and anti-inflammatory products.** All of these products may increase bleeding during surgery. Since many over-the-counter medications contain aspirin, please read labels carefully and refer to the comprehensive list of medications to avoid. *If aspirin or another “blood thinner” such as Coumadin is being prescribed for a heart condition or other medical conditions, please notify us for further instructions.*
- **Scrub affected area with antibacterial cleanser prior to surgery.** Do **not** remove any splints or bandages if you have had a traumatic injury or have been directed to keep them in place.
- **Have a support system in place.** Make arrangements for a responsible adult to take you to and from the hospital or surgery center and remain with you for the first 24 hours.
- **Do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight the day prior to surgery.** This includes water, chewing gum, and mints. On the morning of surgery, you can brush your teeth but do not swallow any of the water. Prescription medication may be taken with a small sip of water on the morning of surgery.
- **Drink extra water the day before surgery** (but be sure to stop drinking by midnight!) A well-hydrated body is less likely to experience nausea after anesthesia.
- **Get prescriptions filled prior to surgery.** You will be given antibiotics and pain medications at your pre-operative visit, get them filled in advance of your surgery.
- **Follow guidelines outlined in Dr. Szymanski’s peri-operative protocol.** These will all help to decrease the amount of swelling and bruising from your surgery.
- **Get proper rest the day before surgery.**

***The day of surgery:***

- Remove all rings and nail polish on the affected hand prior to surgery.
- Do not wear any jewelry or make-up.
- Please arrive to the hospital or surgery center at the appropriate scheduled time.

***Once you are home:***

*You are now on the road to recovery. It is very important that you pay close attention to following the instructions listed below. These will help to assure improved wound healing and decrease the risk of postoperative complications. Following the instructions will help make your recovery easier.*

- **Take your antibiotics and pain medication as prescribed.** Try to have some food in your stomach when taking medications to avoid nausea. If you experience any itching, rashes, or respiratory difficulties, please notify the office, as you may be allergic to one of the medications. Start to wean off the pain medications once symptoms improve. For minor discomfort you may take Tylenol®, if not allergic.
- **Elevation of hand above the level of heart for first 48 hours is important to limit swelling.** Continue with elevation as much as needed for comfort.
- **Do not loosen or remove bandages.** These are applied to control swelling and bleeding, and they will be removed in the office at your first follow-up appointment.
- **Showering is permitted provided that the affected hand is protected from getting wet.** All bandages must be kept clean and dry, so protect hand with tightly sealed plastic bag while in shower.
- **Do not apply heat or cold packs in any manner.**
- **Stitches and splints are usually removed about 7-10 days after surgery.** Please schedule a follow-up appointment if this was not previously arranged.
- **Do not hesitate to call the office if you have any questions regarding your recovery. Notify the office immediately if:**
  - The fingertips are colder on the affected hand.
  - Pain and/or numbness increase in severity despite elevation.
  - Bandages become wet or excessively soiled.
  - Fever elevation above 101 degrees.
  - Excessive bleeding.
- **Come to your scheduled follow-up visits.** We closely follow patients after their surgery to ensure proper healing and to reinforce postoperative instructions to make this the best possible surgical experience.