



Tendon operations on the hand: aftercare advice

Information for patients from the Hand Therapy Service

You have had an operation on your hand. This information sheet provides advice for looking after your hand and dressing at home.

How should I look after my hand at home?

- **Do not** get your dressings or hand wet, and **do not** remove your bandages.
- **Do not** move your fingers or attempt to make your hand into a fist.
- **Do not** use your other hand to bend or straighten your fingers.
- **Do not** use your injured hand.
- Keep your hand elevated (raised) for at least 48 hours following your surgery. It is helpful to keep your sling on during this time.

What should I do if my hand hurts after my surgery?

Any pain should be easily controlled by taking painkillers, such as paracetamol. If you lose feeling in your fingers, they become discoloured or cold, or your hand becomes increasingly painful and you are worried about an infection, then contact the Day Surgery Centre, your GP, or go to the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department (see phone numbers on the next page).

If you have had local anaesthetic, your hand and fingers may feel numb for 72 hours after surgery. You should protect your hand and fingers until the feeling returns.

When will my stitches be removed?

Your stitches should be removed 10 to 14 days after your operation, unless they are dissolvable. This will be discussed at your follow-up appointment.



Will I need a follow-up appointment?

You should be seen by a hand therapist after your operation; it is important that you attend this appointment. If you have not received an appointment through the post a week following your operation please contact your consultant, or one of the Day Surgery Centres (see below).

When can I return to work?

This depends on the type of work you do; you should discuss this with your GP/consultant.

If you are in a supervisory or managerial job that does not need full use of your hand, you could return to work within a few days of surgery. Other light manual jobs may need two to three weeks off work. Heavy manual jobs may need you to be off work for a few weeks longer.

Further information

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Day Surgery Centre where you had your surgery.

- **Channel Day Surgery, William Harvey Hospital, Ashford**
Telephone: 01233 61 62 63 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- **Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, Kent and Canterbury Hospital**
Telephone: 01227 78 31 14 (7:30am to 8pm)
Telephone: 07887 68 76 45 (8pm to 7:30am)
- **Day Surgery Unit, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate**
Telephone: 01843 23 44 99 (7:30am to 8pm)
Telephone: 07887 65 11 62 (8pm to 7:30am)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation