Fingertip Injuries & Amputations

Fingertip injuries are common and often get injured because they are last to escape when pulling your hand out of harm's way. You have *amputated* (cut off) part of your finger. How this turns out depends largely on how much was amputated. If just the tip is amputated, often the end of the finger will grow back and the finger may return to much the same as it was before the injury.

If more of the finger is missing, your caregiver has done the best with the tissue remaining to allow you to keep as much finger as is possible. Your caregiver after checking your injury has tried to leave you with a painless fingertip that has durable, feeling skin. If possible, your caregiver has tried to maintain the finger's length and appearance and preserve its fingernail.

Please read the instructions outlined below and refer to this sheet in the next few weeks. These instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself. Your caregiver may also give you specific instructions. While your treatment has been done according to the most current medical practices available, unavoidable complications occasionally occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, please call your caregiver.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- You may resume normal diet and activities as directed or allowed.
- Keep your hand elevated above the level of your heart. This helps decrease pain and swelling.
- Keep ice packs (or a bag of ice wrapped in a towel) on the injured area for twenty minutes, four times per day, for the first two days.
- Change dressings if necessary or as directed.
- Clean the wound daily or as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Keep appointments as directed.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOU DEVELOP:

- Redness, swelling, numbness or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 100° F (37.8° C) or as your caregiver suggests.
- A *foul* (bad) smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- A breaking open of the wound (edges not staying together) after sutures or staples have been removed.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 03/26/2009 Document Re-Released: 03/16/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.