Gamekeeper's / Skier's Thumb
Care After Surgery

Refer to these instructions for the next few weeks. These discharge instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after surgery. Your caregiver may also give you specific instructions.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Follow your caregiver's instructions as to activities, exercises, physical therapy, and driving a car.
- Daily exercise is helpful for maintaining range of motion (movement and mobility) and strength. Exercise as instructed.
- To lessen swelling, keep the injured hand elevated above the level of your heart as much as possible.
- Apply ice to the injury for 15 to 20 minutes each hour while awake for the first 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a thin towel between the bag of ice and your cast.
- Move the fingers of your injured hand several times a day.
- If a plaster or fiberglass cast applied:
  - Do not try to scratch the skin under the cast using a sharp or pointed object.
  - Check the skin around the cast every day. You may put lotion on any red or sore areas.
  - Keep your cast dry. Your cast can be protected during bathing with a plastic bag. Do not put your cast into the water.
  - If your fiberglass cast gets a little wet, it can be gently dried using a hair dryer, taking care not to burn yourself.
- If a plaster splint applied:
  - Wear the splint as directed or until you are seen for a follow-up examination.
  - Do not get your splint wet. Protect it during bathing with a plastic bag.
  - You may loosen the elastic bandage around the splint if your fingers start to get numb, tingle, get cold, or turn blue.
- Do not put pressure on your cast or splint; this may cause it to break or deform. Do not lean it on hard surfaces for 24 hours after application.
- Take medications as directed by your caregiver.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF YOU DEVELOP:

- Increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from beneath your cast or splint.
- Redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound or from beneath your cast or splint.
- Pus coming from wound or from beneath your cast or splint.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops.
- A foul smell coming from the wound or dressing or from beneath your cast or splint.
- You have any other questions or concerns.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing
- You develop any reaction or side effects to medications given.
- Your fingers begin to feel numb, tingly, cold, or turn white or blue.

If you do not have a window in your cast for observing the wound, a discharge or minor bleeding may show up as a stain on the outside of your cast. Report these findings to your caregiver.

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