

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS following HAND *and* WRIST Surgery



Below are answers to questions frequently asked following wrist and hand surgery (carpal/cubital tunnel release, DeQuervain's release, trigger finger release, ganglion cyst excision, digital nerve repair, tendon repair, fracture fixation, removal of hardware).

**How do I care for my dressing?** Do not remove your dressing until you are seen by the doctor, unless instructed at surgery center that you may remove prior. Typically the carpal and trigger surgeries may remove dressing after 3 days. If the dressing is tight due to swelling after surgery, you may loosen it, but make sure to not remove it as it is protecting your incision from infection.

**How long do I have to wear my sling?** You will typically have to wear the sling for a few days for comfort and to elevate your arm to prevent swelling. You may remove your sling a few times (3-4) per day to move your elbow, wrist and fingers to prevent stiffness. You do not have to wear the sling to sleep.

**When can I drive?** Generally, you can drive once you are no longer taking narcotics or wearing a sling or cast.

**When will I start certified hand therapy, and how long will I need to attend?** In most cases, you will be instructed to begin therapy at your first post-op visit. If you had a flexor tendon repair or a removal of hardware, expect to begin therapy IMMEDIATELY (1 to 2 days post-op), so you should make your therapy appointment prior to your surgery date.

**When is my first follow-up appointment, and how often will I need to see the doctor?** Your first visit will be 10 to 14 days after your surgery. Dr. Ugwonalu will let you know how often he will need to see you for a check-up.



**When can I return to sports?** Generally, the wound may take 4 to 6 weeks to heal, so we do not recommend participating in sports to protect your wound from infection, etc. Dr. Ugwonalu will discuss with you at your first post-op visit.

You may not play full contact sports until 3 to 6 months following your surgery (depending on the nature of your surgery).

**Who do I contact with questions about my sling or brace?** For all questions regarding the care of your sling or any other brace (adjusting it, cleaning it, etc.) please contact our office at 404-355-0743, extension 1738 and we will be happy to help you.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*following* **ELBOW Surgery**



## **How long do I have to wear my splint?**

You will typically have to wear the splint until your first post-op appointment. At your first visit, the splint will be removed, your wound will be evaluated and the sutures may have to remain for an additional week depending on the size of the incision. You may also receive a range of motion elbow brace that will be adjusted per your doctor's instruction.

## **Do I have to wear the splint at all times? Do I have to wear it to sleep?**

You must wear your splint/brace at all times, including sleeping.

## **When can I drive again?**

Generally, when you are no longer wearing the splint/brace, as well as no longer taking any pain medication.

## **When can I return to sports?**

You may not play contact sports until 4 to 6 months following surgery.

## **When will I start physical therapy and for how long will I attend?**

UCL reconstruction: generally after your first post op appointment. Total Elbow/  
Radial head replacement/Arthroscopic procedures: immediately following surgery.

## **When will my first post-op appointment be?**

Your first post-op visit will be 10 to 14 days after surgery. Dr. Ugwonalie will let you know how often you will return for follow-up appointments.

## **When can I shower?**

You may shower 24 hours after your surgery. Please cover your elbow with a plastic bag to protect your wound.

## **Who do I contact with questions about my sling or brace?**

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