

## **HAND AND UPPER EXTREMITY SURGERY**

The following instructions apply to Dr. Ericson's patients who have had hand and upper extremity surgery. If Dr. Ericson has given you specific or different instructions, please follow them carefully.

**\*\*\*Please call Dr. Ericson's office if you have any questions or concerns.\*\*\***

**(425) 776-4444**

### **DIET**

- Start with liquids
- Advance as tolerated

### **ACTIVITY**

- Rest today AND tomorrow
- Keep hand elevated above level of heart for 24-48 hours or until swelling resolves
- Leave your dressing INTACT unless otherwise instructed by Dr. Ericson
- If your fingers swell, your dressing is probably too tight and should be loosened
- Keep your incisions DRY for 7-10 days. Do not put anything on your incisions
- You may shower, but cover the arm with a plastic bag and keep the arm upright
- KEEP THE INCISIONS DRY and LEAVE YOUR DRESSING ALONE

### **PAIN**

- Keep hand/arm elevated on pillows on your chest at night until the initial pain and swelling resolve and there is no throbbing when hand is in a dependent position
- Take pain medication as prescribed, if necessary. You may take Tylenol or Motrin instead
- Parts of the hand or arm may be numb immediately after surgery; this is related to application of a long-acting local anesthetic (bupivacaine) at the surgical site(s). This medication lasts about 6 hours in most patients, but can last several days. The surgical site will tend to become painful as the block wears off.

### **WORK**

- For many jobs, patients can return to work when they are reasonably comfortable, off pain medication, and feel they can drive safely. Some activities must wait until the swelling and bruising from surgery resolves, which typically takes 1-3 weeks. Other activities must wait until the surgery site has healed. Please discuss any concerns you might have with Dr. Ericson.

### **CALL DR. ERICSON IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING**

- **Any sign of infection:** increasing pain, swelling, redness or pus, fever over 101 F
- **Increasing swelling or pain**, unrelieved by loosening your dressing and elevating your arm
- **Bleeding** from the operative site. Some staining of the dressing is normal.
- **Allergic reaction** or severe side effects from medication prescribed by Dr. Ericson