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| PATIENT'S NAME _____ |
| MED. REC. # _____ |
| DOB _____ |
| <i>Patient Identification</i> |

**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS
FOR HAND / UPPER EXTREMITY SURGERY**
Department of Orthopaedics

After your surgery, follow the instructions as checked below.

Instructions following anesthesia or sedation

- The medicines and/or anesthesia that you received today are strong and will affect your body for at least the next few hours. You may have trouble with coordination or thinking because of these medicines. For your safety, follow these instructions carefully **for the next 24 hours**:
 - Do not drive** at all.
 - You **must** be taken home today by a responsible adult.
 - Do not drink any alcoholic beverages
 - You should rest today. Do not go to work.
 - You should not do things that require you to think and act quickly. You should not do things that require careful work. For example, avoid cooking, sewing, and operating machinery or electrical appliances.
 - You should not make important decisions or sign legal papers today.
 - The medicines may make you feel drowsy or sick to your stomach. Or you may have a poor appetite. If these problems last longer than 24 hour or if they are severe, call your doctor.

Medicines

- Refer to separate "Patient Medication List"

Pain and Prescription Medicine

- You have been given a prescription for pain medicine. Take it as directed.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while you are taking "narcotic" pain medicines.** This includes medicine like: Percocet® (oxycodone hydrochloride; acetaminophen), Tylenol #3® (acetaminophen; codeine) and Vicodin® (hydrocodone bitartrate; acetaminophen).
- Nausea, dizziness and drowsiness are normal side effects of prescribed pain medicine. If you have these symptoms and can not tolerate them, stop taking the medicine.
- If you are not having pain, stop taking the pain medicine.
- In addition to any pain medicine that your doctor has prescribed, note the following.
 - You may take Tylenol® (acetaminophen).
 - You may take Motrin®, ibuprofen, aspirin, or similar anti-inflammatory medicines.
- You may apply ice for the first 48 hours after surgery.
- You have been given a prescription for an antibiotic. Take it as directed.

Surgical Dressing

- Keep your dressing clean and dry until your follow-up appointment.
- If there is blood and drainage on your dressing, wrap over it with clean gauze or an ace bandage.
- You can remove the dressing 3 days after surgery.
- Other instructions about your dressing: _____.

Stitches and General Care

- Stitches will be removed 10 to 15 days after surgery.
- Keep your hand raised at a level above your heart for 24 hours after surgery.
- Keep your brace or splint on at all times.
- You can take off the sling after 48 hours if it is more comfortable for you.

Bathing

- Do not get the wound wet until after your follow-up visit.
- Do not get the wound wet for 3 days after surgery.
- You may shower after 3 days. Pat the wound dry and cover it with clean dressing.
- No tub bathing, pool, or hot tub** use until your stitches are removed.

Activity

- You may go back to all activities as tolerated.
- Avoid demanding activities and heavy lifting.
- Do not put any weight on the part of the body that had the surgery.
- Rehabilitation will begin at your first after-surgery visit.

Diet

- Start with light meals and then go back to a regular diet.
- Drink lots of water.

How you may feel

You may have any of the following normal symptoms as you recover from surgery:

As your incision heals

- √ A slightly red area around the incision.
- √ A small amount of clear or light red fluid staining the dressing.
- √ A ridge along the incision. This will go away.

Other reactions to surgery

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| √ Some bouts of nausea and vomiting | √ Cramps |
| √ Mild swelling at the area of surgery | √ Gas pains |
| √ Slight bloating and swelling of abdomen (belly) | √ Tiredness, muscle aches, or headaches |

Call your doctor's office if....

Remember, your doctor, or someone covering for your doctor, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In a life-threatening emergency, please dial 911 or your local emergency services.

Call your doctor right away, or come to the Emergency Unit for care, if you have any of the following:

- Temperature of 102 degrees or higher, and/or chills
- Cannot urinate
- Nausea and vomiting that lasts more than 24 hours
- Drowsiness getting worse
- Pain getting worse or not relieved by pain medicine
- Redness around the incision that is spreading
- Bright red blood or foul-smelling discharge ("pus") coming from the wound
- Shortness of breath
- Swelling in the legs
- Chest pain
- Severe itching, rash or hives

Return Visit

- You have a follow-up appointment in the Orthopaedic Surgery Clinic on:
 ____ / ____ / ____ at ____:____ a.m. / p.m.
 Call 617-667-3940 if you need to make any changes to the date and time.
- You must follow up with the Hand Surgery Clinic. Call 617-632-7827 to make an appointment.

X _____ **OR**
Patient's Signature Print Name

X _____ and _____
Signature of Person authorized to sign for patient Print Name Relationship to patient

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ **Time:** ____ : ____ ○ a.m. ○ p.m.

X _____
Circle: M.D. / P.A. - Signature Print Name Date Time (24 hour)