



**TUAN A. TRAN M.D., M.B.A, F.A.C.S.**

**Diplomate American Board of Plastic Surgery, Diplomate American Board of Surgery**

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*General Surgery, Reconstructive Surgery, Aesthetic Surgery, Plastic and Hand Surgery*

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## **Flexor Tendon Repair**

### **Post-Operative Instructions**

#### **Purpose of surgery**

The goal of the operation is to repair or reattach lacerated or detached flexor tendons. The flexor tendons (muscles) are responsible for flexing (bending) your fingers.

#### **After Surgery**

- You will have a firm splint covering your forearm and the back of your hand and fingers holding your fingers flexed (bent).
- All your fingers will be included in the splint for any finger flexor tendon repair; and, only your thumb will be included in the splint for a thumb flexor tendon repair.
- You will be able to see the tips of your fingers/thumb to ensure they are getting good circulation. The palm side of your fingers/thumb will be protected by a soft padding that they will be resting on while the plaster will keep your fingers bent from the nail side.
- You may have some numbness or tingling of fingers/thumb due to the local anesthetic injections used to help control post-operative pain (this should wear off within about 24 hours). After the first 24 hours, you may still experience some numbness and tingling in parts of the operative finger(s)/thumb if you also had a nerve repair.
- While we do not anticipate significant swelling following this procedure, it would be helpful to keep your hand/wrist elevated as best you can for the first 24 hours after surgery.
- The thickness of the dressing will prevent the effective placement of a cold-pack.
- Please do not move your fingers, even if they were not operated on. This is to help prevent the repair/reattachment from rupturing.
- Keep your pain under control. Take the prescription pain medicine as prescribed for the first day, and decide the next to what extent you need it.
- Keeping yourself comfortable will allow you to keep your fingers moving and minimize internal scarring from the surgery.

#### **Care for the Incision Site**

- Do not remove the dressing/splint.
- Keep the wound and your skin clean. Soap and water or peroxide is an excellent skin cleanser.
- Please do not use salves like Neosporin™ or Bacitracin™ for the wound.
- Keep the wound covered with a non-adherent bandage at all times.



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## **Recovery**

- The speed and extent of your recovery is somewhat variable. As you start therapy, you will notice that you will have the ability to flex your fingers but in a very limited way.
- You must follow the therapist's instructions carefully with regards to motion so as to avoid rupturing the repair. You will not be able to appreciate the success of the tendon repair for several weeks.

## **Activity Level**

You will NOT be allowed to use the operative hand for several weeks depending upon your formal therapy protocol.

## **Therapy**

Your optimal recovery will depend upon a formal, supervised therapy program. Dr. Tran will refer you to a qualified therapist near you

## **Follow Up**

Your first post-operative visit will be within 4-7 days after the operation. Our office staff will arrange this appointment at your pre-operative visit. Once the splint/dressing is taken down, you will start therapy. Dr. Tran will replace your operative splint with a plastic molded splint (orthosis) that you will wear for the next few weeks.

## **Possible Problems/Emergency**

If you develop any symptoms such as fevers with temperature greater than 101.5 F, chills, persistent nausea and vomiting, inability to urinate, severe pain not controlled with medications, new or different colored drainage from your surgical incision, or for any acute problems or illnesses, please contact our office at 714-839-8000 between the hours of 9AM-6PM Monday-Thursday and 9AM-1PM on Friday; or you may reach us at 714-860-3588 after hours.

If you are unable to reach your surgeon or a member of his staff, go to the Emergency Room closest to you.

### **References:**

The Hand & Upper Extremity Center of Georgia. (2020). *Post-operative instructions for flexor tendon repair*. Retrieved from [https://www.handcenterga.com/sites/handcenterga.com/files/post\\_op\\_tendon\\_repair.pdf](https://www.handcenterga.com/sites/handcenterga.com/files/post_op_tendon_repair.pdf)