

Discharge Guidelines

Upper Extremity Open Biopsy Soft Tissue Mass Arm/Hand

Please note: These are general guidelines to help answer the most common questions patients have after their biopsy. The photos in these guidelines WILL NOT necessarily match your exact biopsy site.



Benign fibromyxoid soft tissue tumor (right hand) as seen on MRI scan.



X-ray shows soft tissue mass on the little (fifth) finger.

Daily Incision Care

- Look at your incision and check for openings, drainage, swelling, redness, changes in color, or bleeding. If you detect any of the above problems, contact your surgeon's office.
- Change your dry dressing daily or leave uncovered if there is no drainage.

Activity

- You may be given a splint or sling for comfort and protection of the operative site. This will provide support for the dependent limb to help prevent swelling and discomfort.
- Avoid repetitive use of your involved arm.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects.
- You may return to work or school if you limit activities that involve using the arm/hand that has been operated on.

Diet

- Your appetite may be less than normal after surgery.
- Incorporate proteins and plenty of fluids into your diet, both of which will aid in the healing process.
- Increase the amount of fiber in your diet after surgery to prevent constipation if you are taking a narcotic.

Medication

- Continue to take your regular medications.
- If necessary, take prescribed pain medication (narcotics) as directed.
- DO NOT drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medication.
- If you are taking narcotics, you should take some type of laxative to prevent opioid-induced constipation.

Common Problems

- If you experience pain and/or swelling, try elevating the site for relief, and apply ice. Use caution with ice – do not leave on for longer than 20 minutes to prevent frost burn.
- If you experience persistent numbness/tingling in your extremity, call your surgeon/nurse practitioner.
- For constipation (not being able to move your bowels), drink plenty of water and non-carbonated fluids, and eat foods that are high in fiber (e.g. bran, prunes, fruit, whole wheat breads). There are numerous over-the-counter medications available to help relieve constipation such as Dulcolax, Magnesium Citrate or Miralax. Ask your local pharmacist to assist you in finding a laxative that is right for you.
- If you smoked cigarettes before the surgery, **DO NOT START SMOKING AGAIN!** Smoking (the nicotine) causes constriction of blood vessels preventing adequate blood flow to the operative area and can delay healing. If you need assistance with this, please contact the MGH Quit Smoking Service at 617-726-7443.

Follow-up

- Schedule a follow-up appointment with your surgeon in 1-2 weeks from the surgery date to discuss further treatment plans.

Questions/Concerns

- For any questions, call your surgeon/nurse practitioner.
- Drs. Kevin Raskin, Joseph Schwab, Santiago Lozano-Calderon: 617-724-3700
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Anne Fiore: 617-724-7630

These instructions are provided as basic post-operative guidelines. Your surgeon/nurse practitioner may give you more specific instructions. Refer to our website for more information:

<http://www.massgeneral.org/ortho-oncology/education>

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