

# Distal Interphalangeal Joint Fusion

## General Information

- You can eat and drink when you feel able to.
- Swelling and pain is normal, especially for the first 48 hours. Each patient experiences discomfort to a different degree but you can expect your discomfort to decrease rapidly over the first 48-72 hours postoperatively.
- Ice can be applied as needed for 20 minutes at a time, with 20 minute breaks in-between.
- Heat may be used as needed after the swelling is completely gone.
- Your doctor will give you a prescription for non-narcotic pain medication before you leave the hospital. Please check with us if you are allergic to any pain medication.
  - o Please note, we do not prescribe narcotic medication for this surgery.
- You will have receive a local anesthetic during your operative procedure. In general, the local anesthesia continues to work for 4-12 hours postoperatively. This local anesthesia will greatly diminish your discomfort. However, as the anesthetic begins to wear off, you are encouraged to take your pain medication to help alleviate the ensuing anticipated discomfort.
- If you are experiencing any of the following, call our office or the doctor on call immediately:
  - o Fever greater than 100.4 °F
  - o Chills
  - o Shortness of breath
  - o Excessive redness or swelling of incisions
  - o Yellow (pus-like) or white drainage at incision sites
  - o Bleeding that soaks your dressings and cannot be controlled by firm pressure
  - o Pain not relieved by prescribed medications

## How to reach your provider:

### MyChart:

This is the easiest and quickest way to contact your provider. You may send a message anytime, and can include photos as needed.

### By phone:

Weekdays 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Call the Upper Extremity  
Orthopaedic Clinic at  
**503-494-8645.**

After business hours/weekend/  
holidays: Call the OHSU Hospital  
Operator at 503-494-8311 and  
ask to be connected to the on-call  
orthopaedic resident.

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[www.ohsu.edu/ortho](http://www.ohsu.edu/ortho)





## Activity

- For up to two weeks after your procedure, avoid using the hand on your operative side and lifting objects heavier than one to two pounds.
- After about four weeks, you may begin heavier tasks as approved by your surgeon.
- When you can return to work is dependent upon the type of work you do. Please ask your surgeon for specific work restrictions.
- You can drive once you feel that you can safely operate a vehicle.

## Wound Care

- It is OK to shower immediately following your procedure but please keep your wound clean and dry for four days. After four days, you may remove your dressing and get your incision wet in the shower.
- No soaking or swimming until your wound has fully closed.

## Occupational Therapy

- Occupational therapy will start approximately two weeks after your procedure. Your sutures will be removed at this appointment.
- Occupational therapy can take place at OHSU, or with an Occupational Therapist of your choice. Please let our office know where you are planning to go if outside of OHSU before your procedure.

## Follow-up appointments you should have scheduled:

- You will either be scheduled for an occupational therapy appointment at OHSU approximately two weeks after your procedure, or you will need to set-up an appointment with an outside Occupational Therapist to start approximately two weeks after your procedure.

Scheduled on:

\_\_/\_\_/\_\_ at \_\_:\_\_am/pm

- Since our occupational therapists at OHSU remove sutures at the first appointment, you will need to schedule a post-operative appointment with one of our physician assistant's if you plan on going to an outside facility for occupational therapy. Unless medically necessary, a post-operative appointment with our Orthopaedic office will not be scheduled after this operation.

If applicable, scheduled on:

\_\_/\_\_/\_\_ at \_\_:\_\_am/pm

**Please let our office know if you need to make any of these appointments.**