



SMITA R. RAMANADHAM, M.D.
PLASTIC SURGERY

Trigger Finger Surgery

Patient Care Instructions

General Information

Trigger finger involves an imbalance between the pulleys and tendons in the hand that bend the fingers. Trigger finger surgery involves the release of a small pulley to allow your tendon to glide freely in your hand. This should relieve the finger clicking and pain. This is done with a small incision in the palm. This is an outpatient surgery that can often be done under local anesthesia with sedation.

Things to handle prior to your surgery

Avoid all NSAIDs (motrin, aspirin, ibuprofen, etc) for 7-10 days prior to procedure unless otherwise directed by your doctor. Continued use may cause bleeding.

Avoid all herbal medicine or supplements for 3 weeks prior to procedure. Continued use may cause bleeding.

Arrange for someone to drive you home.

Necessary medications will be called into your pharmacy. These should be picked up prior to surgery.

Have electrolyte containing fluids such as Gatorade or electrolyte water on hand.

Have stool softeners/laxatives on hand, such as Colace, Biscodyl, Milk of Magnesia. These can be purchased at your local pharmacy.

Review the attached list of medications not to take during the perioperative period. If you have any further questions that were not addressed during your consultation then please call

If you are unsure if you can stop a medication then please call the prescribing provider to confirm if this is medically safe.

For your convenience, we have included a [Suggested Shopping List](#) in the addendum to these instructions

Pre-Operative Guidelines

Smoking should be stopped a minimum of 4 weeks prior to surgery. Smoking should be avoided for at least 4 weeks after surgery as well. Smoking can greatly interfere with healing and lead to postoperative complications.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery. This includes no water, gum, or hard candy.

Blood pressure and/or heart medications can be taken with a sip of water as directed by your prescribing physician.

If you take medication for diabetes then confirm with your prescribing physician how to manage these medications prior to surgery.



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If you are prone to nausea or motion sickness let your anesthesiologist know on the day of surgery. Medications can be started prior to surgery or during surgery to help improve your postoperative experience.

Post-Operative Care

Take pain medication as prescribed. Tylenol alone can also be taken but do not exceed the total daily dose as instructed on the bottle. The typically prescribed pain medication has Tylenol in it so this must be accounted for if taken. Do not drink alcohol with these medications.

Take a suggested stool softener/laxative until bowels begin to function normally after surgery. A combination of anesthesia and pain medication usually makes these necessary for a few days.

Do not smoke or be around smoking as even second hand smoke delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Get plenty of rest.

Follow a well-balanced diet, which includes protein and is limited in salt intake. A high salt diet or meal, can lead to increased swelling and prolonged recovery.

Oral hydration should include the use of electrolyte containing fluids such as Gatorade or a low calorie substitute.

Limit the amount of caffeinated beverages as they can promote dehydration; however Dr. Ramanadham recommends you maintain your daily average of caffeine to avoid headaches.

Keep your arm elevated for the first 7 days following surgery. This is best done on several pillows so that your hand is above your heart level.

Activity Restrictions

Walking is encouraged shortly after the operation. Avoid elevated heart rates or blood pressures.

Do not lift anything with the injured hand for 4 weeks.

Do not drive while taking any prescription pain medication.

The finger(s) that was operated on can begin gentle range of motion as tolerated once the dressing is removed.

Overall, Limit the use of your hand that was operated on.

Incision Care

You may have sutures in place that will be removed in 10 to 14 days.

You may shower after the operation, but the dressing should remain dry and in place for 2 days. You can use a plastic bag to protect it in the shower.



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The dressing can be removed in 2 days. At that point, warm soapy water can run over the incision. Do not scrub or soak the incision.

If desired, a dry dressing or bandaid can be replaced daily after you shower.

What to Expect after Trigger Finger Surgery

You can expect some swelling of the operative site.

You can expect some slight oozing (bloody) from the stitch lines and swelling of the incisions. Gauze can be reapplied if it is bothersome.

If you experience any numbness or tingling, please elevate your arm. The outer ACE wrap may be too tight and this can be loosed. Keep all inner dressings and wraps in place.

When to Call the Office

If you have increasing redness or swelling around the incision.

If you have severe pain not relieved by pain medication.

If you have any side effects from the medication: rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.

If you have fever over 101.

If you have yellow or greenish drainage from an incision or notice a foul odor.

For medical questions, please call our office.

Follow-up Care and Appointments

You will be seen by Dr. Ramanadham approximately 10 to 14 days after the surgery.

Sutures will be removed between 10 and 14 days after surgery.

You will be seen again at 6 weeks. This may vary.



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Suggested Shopping List

Items to have on hand prior to surgery

Trigger Finger Surgery

- Prescriptions will be called into your local pharmacy as ordered by Dr. Ramanadham or given to you on the day of surgery. Typical medications are as follows but these will be tailored to your needs.
 - Norco or tramadol (pain medication)

- Tylenol

- Gatorade or another low calorie alternative, such as water with electrolytes

- Protein Supplements

- Stool softener / laxative (choose one):
 - Docusate (Colace) 100 mg orally twice daily when taking pain medication
 - Milk of Magnesia 30cc/1 Tablespoon twice daily when taking pain medication
 - Prune juice or Sorbitol orally
 - Biscodyl or Magnesium Citrate as needed for constipation