

PREPARATION FOR HAND SURGERY

You are due to have an operation on your hand(s). Operations may be cancelled for avoidable reasons. You will receive general advice about your admission from the hospital but there are some additional issues, some of which are specific to hand surgery.

- Jewellery** No operation will occur with a ring or bracelet on the limb(s) to be operated on, especially if tight. All jewellery must be removed before admission, if necessary with the assistance of a jeweller.
- Nails** Fingernails and especially acrylic fingernail extensions have been shown to harbor bacteria. Ensure that your hands and nails are clean and that any acrylic nails have been removed.
- Skin** The presence of cuts, scratches, abrasions and burns on the hands pose a risk of post-operative infection and will necessitate rescheduling of your surgery.
- Health** Please advise us if any health problems occur whilst awaiting surgery. The operation will be cancelled if you have a heavy cold or active infection.
- Fasting** General or regional anaesthetic: You can eat and drink normally until six hours before your operation. You can drink water until two hours before your operation.
Local anaesthetic: No fasting is necessary but it is wise to limit yourself to clear fluids for two hours before surgery.
- Driving** You cannot drive home from your surgery. Please arrange transport. You may feel that you are capable of driving a vehicle after surgery even though a dressing and/or splint have been applied to your limb. This may restrict your ability to control a vehicle and that by driving you may well be liable to prosecution. It is wiser, morally and legally for you not to drive until advised otherwise.
- Travel** See separate information about the risks of long journeys near the time of surgery.
- Holiday** Inform us if you have holiday plans around the time of surgery. Many operations have specific and important follow up appointments for wound-care and/or splinting. You will probably not be reimbursed if you cancel a holiday because of planned surgery. Remember, if you are abroad, I cannot deal with complications. Holidaying in this country is unlikely to be a problem, although you must avoid going on the beach, as sand and sea are a problem whilst you are wearing a dressing or plaster. If sun-bathing you should keep your dressed limb in the shade.
- Plasters** Swelling can occur at altitude and cause dressings or plasters to become tight. If flying after an operation, check with your individual airline as each have their own guidelines relating to surgery. Also make sure your travel insurers are informed and be aware this may increase the price of travel insurance for cover abroad.