



THUMB CMC ARTHROPLASTY POST-OP PROTOCOL

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- It is important to protect your surgical repair for best results
- It may take 6 months or more for full pain relief and recovery of strength
- Keep the surgical splint completely clean and dry after surgery
- Keep the hand elevated above the shoulder for the first 3 days as much as possible
- Ice the wrist and front of the elbow for 20 minutes, three to four times a day
- We recommend 650 mg of Tylenol 4 times a day for the first 7 days after surgery
 - Ibuprofen 800 mg (or other anti-inflammatory as tolerated) three times a day after surgery
- When sitting or lying, use pillows to support your operative hand to prevent swelling
- Take 1500 mg of Vitamin C daily for 2 weeks after surgery to improve healing

Phase I: 0-2 weeks

Splint

- Splint/ACE wrap is placed at the time of surgery; keep clean dry at all times until post-op appointment

Exercises

- Passive finger/ elbow exercises
 - Use your non-surgical hand to move the surgical fingers for 10 minutes/3 times a day
 - Move the elbow at least 3 times a day
 - NO lifting over 2 lbs with the operative hand

Phase II: 2-6 weeks

Splint

- Your surgical splint will be removed to take out stitches at your first post-op visit at 10 to 14 days
- You will go to **OT** or Hand Clinic at this point to be fitted with a custom Orthoplast **CMC splint including wrist**
 - **Splint positions thumb MP joint in 30° of flexion and slight abduction to ensure capsular healing**
 - Wear this splint at all times except when showering or exercising for the first 6 weeks

Exercises

- Continue shoulder, elbow and wrist range of motion exercises
- Begin passive ROM of the CMC joint; abduction and extension only
 - Avoid flexion/adduction of the CMC and thumb opposition to protect the dorsal repair of the capsule
- Active motion of the non-surgical digits
- May use putty for strengthening of all digits except thumb
- Ice therapy and gentle massage will help with swelling

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Phase III: Weeks 6-10

Xrays at 6 week post-op clinic visit at Paragon

Splint

- Wear custom splint during the day until 12 weeks post op

Exercises

- Begin active thumb palmar abduction, opposition, and circumduction
 - Begin light isometric thumb adduction; no heavy gripping
 - Work active ROM to reach tip of thumb to base of small finger
 - Light passive stretching to tolerance
 - Light functional activities (buttoning clothes, writing)
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Phase IV: Weeks 10 – 16

Exercises

- Progressive strengthening with addition of active thenar adduction and pinch
- Heavier grip exercises are added; may use thumb with putty

Restrictions

- Avoid heavy gripping and repetitive activities such as pruning or weed eating
 - Splint when doing housework or other activities
 - Some patients prefer smaller thumb based splint at this point
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Phase V: Weeks 24+

Exercises

- Slow return to activities or work that involve heavy lifting, gripping or vibration
- Full activities if pain free, no swelling or tenderness

Restrictions

- Some patients prefer smaller thumb based splint at this point
- Others use a soft thumb spica splint such as a neoprene Comfort Cool brace