

## **INFORMATION PRIOR TO HAVING YOUR TRAPEZIECTOMY SURGERY:**

You are going to undergo surgery to remove the small bone at the base of your thumb. This leaflet has been designed to provide you with an overview of the surgery and understanding of what to expect post operatively.

Over the next few months you will be given advice regarding the rehabilitation and management of your hand from your hand therapist. The effort you put into your rehabilitation is significantly related to the end result obtained from this surgery.

Recovery for this operation can be slow and it can often be 3-6 months before you can resume normal heavy activity. It might also take up to 9-12 months for your pain to settle.

You will usually be able to return to driving after approximately 8 weeks; however, this is at the discretion of your consultant/GP/therapist.

Timing of your return to work is variable according to your occupation and you should discuss this with your Consultant/GP.

### **0-6-week general plan:**

#### **0-2 Weeks:**

You will be placed into a cast with dressings post operatively which you should remain in up until approximately 2 weeks.

Wound clinic should be booked for 2 weeks post operation for removal of stitches and to review your scar formation/wound.

You then need to be in a splint following removal of plaster cast. This can be provided by the hand therapy service or fracture clinic at the hospital.

Please ensure you are not using the thumb for activity and that it is protected by the cast or splint.

#### **2-6 Weeks**

Two weeks after your operation your plaster will be replaced with a lighter splint which is to be worn continuously for a further 4 weeks. For your awareness, you will be able to remove your splint each day for washing (once wound closed) and exercises only. You will then be provided appropriate exercises from the hand therapy service at this point.



### **Wound Management:**

You may have dissolvable stitches which will gradually fall out and disappear around 2-4 weeks. You may have non-dissolving sutures which will be taken out either by wound clinic or nurse at your GP surgery or Orthopaedic team around 2 weeks post operation. It is imperative this suture removal appointment is booked once you know your surgical date.

To book this at MCH wound clinic service, please contact the department on 0300 1233 444 following options: 1 -> 2 -> 2

### **Oedema Management:**

Hand elevation is important to prevent swelling and stiffness of the fingers, so remember not to walk with your hand dangling or to sit with your hand held in your lap.

Further swelling management techniques can be advised by your therapist in your initial assessment.

Safe application of an ice pack can be useful for no more than 10 minutes an hour.

### **Scar Care:**

Scars are produced as a result of the body normal healing process. They may become more red and raised. The scar can take up to 18 months to 2 years to fully mature. You will be provided with advice on scar management from the nurse at wound clinic and later further information from the hand therapy team on scar massage techniques.

### **Exercises**

Following your surgery, you will be seen in the hand therapy service and provided appropriate exercises. Please refrain from moving and using the thumb, however please maintain movement at your shoulder, elbow and fingers.

You are advised to use your hand for very light activities only (no heavier than 1kg / 2 lb in weight) for the first 6 weeks. Be careful of activities involving lateral key grip e.g. using a key, holding a book/newspaper, holding a plate and to avoid heavy pinch grip and lifting until 12 weeks. We will advise you further in therapy sessions.

### **Hand Therapy Appointments:**

You will be contacted to book your hand therapy appointment once we receive a referral from your consultant post operatively. If you have not heard from the hand therapy team within a week of your surgery, please contact MCH adult therapies service to enquire further. If there are any issues please ask for a message to be passed onto the hand therapists for a member of our team to deal with. The number to call is 0300 1233 444 and follow options: 1 -> 2 -> 3.

Alternatively, you can contact our department on [medway.physiotherapy@nhs.net](mailto:medway.physiotherapy@nhs.net).

### **To do checklist:**

- Read the above information to understand your surgery and the initial plan
- Have wound clinic booked at 2 weeks post operation
- Have hand therapy booked within 2-3 weeks of your operation and if not have contacted MCH hand therapy team.

