

## Practical Advice for Patients

Please find some helpful tips and advice below:

- **Practice**

- Dressing
- Undressing
- Using the toilet
- Brushing your teeth
- Try doing day-to-day tasks with one hand behind your back to see if you will be able to cope

- **Prepare for the first few days after surgery:**

- Open and re-seal cans and bottles you might need
- Pre-cook and freeze casseroles, etc which can be simply re-heated.
- Open medication containers and leave easy to re-open. Then, put these medication containers out of the reach of children, even if you don't expect children visiting.
- Have a "wash and wear" haircut
- Sign any important documents or contracts if your writing hand is going to be out of action
- Move daily items to low shelves to avoid reaching above head height

- **Ask for help**

- Child care
- Meals
- Personal daily needs (including dressing/undressing)
- Housework (including washing-up if you do not have a dishwasher)
- Ironing
- Gardening
- Pet care
- Transport
- Your local dairy and most supermarkets will delivery groceries
- Buying fresh bread? Ask the baker or supermarket to pre-cut it for you.

## It helps to have...

- **In the shower**

- **Plastic bags and rubber bands to cover bandages -small bin liners will do. Use two at a time.**
- **Bottle sponge (soft sponge on a long stick) - for the armpit of your "good" hand.**
- **Shower brush**
- **A hair brush in the shower will help you to wash your hair.**
- **Cotton terry cloth bathrobe - to dry your back.**

- **In the bathroom**

- **Toothpaste, shampoo, etc. in flip-top or pump (not screw top) dispensers.**
- **Consider an electric razor.**
- **A Marigold glove may help to prevent your hand getting wet if you wet shave, and also give you more grip.**
- **Flossers (dental floss on a "Y" shaped handle).**

- **In the bedroom**

- **Large sleeve shirts and tops.**
- **Put away clothing with buttons, fasteners or snaps in the back or which uses drawstrings. Zips may be difficult to operate one-handed. Loose clothes with no buttons etc will be simpler to put on and take off.**
- **Sports bra or a camisole instead of a bra**

Many patients undergoing hand surgery will be treated as day case patients, although some will require an overnight stay. Your surgeon will have discussed this with you prior to your admission.

Please leave rings, watches and jewellery at home for security as you will be asked to remove them prior to surgery. Ladies should remove all nail polish and acrylic false nails prior to admission.

Just before you go to the operating theatre, you will be asked to change into a hospital gown. On your return from theatre your limb may be heavily bandaged, elevated, or in a sling. You would be wise to consider the clothing that you will wear to go home from hospital – are the sleeves loose enough to accommodate the bandages? Is the garment easy to put on and take off?

Your surgeon will advise you about when it will be safe for you to drive, but please remember that your insurance will be invalid if you drive within 48 hours of having a general anaesthetic.

Should you need a medical certificate for your employer, your surgeon will be happy to give you one prior to your departure.

Once you are at home you should follow any advice you have been given regarding taking pain-killers, checking your fingers for colour warmth and sensation, and any exercises you may have been given. Your consultant's secretary will contact you to make arrangements for your change of dressings, removal of sutures, and a follow-up appointment to see him again. If you have any problems at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact her on 01256 377603 (Mr Hobby), or call one of the nursing staff on Enborne Ward (day cases) 01256 357111 extension 3355, or Loddon Ward (overnight patients) 01256 357111 extension 3375.

## Contact and Appointments

If you need to make an appointment, please contact Diane Cole on 01256 377603 or [info@basinghand.co.uk](mailto:info@basinghand.co.uk)