

**Distal radius ORIF – Open reduction internal fixation surgery - Post-operative protocol
Dr. Haverstock**

Day of surgery

- Fast 8 hrs before surgery - nothing to eat or drink, you may take your pain medication with sips
- Your day surgery will have you at the hospital for approximately 5-6 hrs, a prescription for pain medication will be provided.
- After surgery
 - Rest and take it easy at home
 - You will likely have had a nerve block and your arm and hand can lack sensation and strength for 12-24 hours. Wear a simple sling to support the arm on your way home, then take the sling off and elevate the hand above the heart while resting.
 - Take acetaminophen 1 gram every 6 hours (not more), anti-inflammatory as needed for pain as directed on the bottle (ibuprofen, naproxen, Celebrex etc.).
 - Narcotic pain medication as needed. It can lead to constipation and nausea/vomiting. I recommend taking it regularly for the first several days and then as needed thereafter.
 - I recommend taking all your pain medication as prescribed before bed and every 4-6 hours for the first 2-3 days, you can then continue the acetaminophen and anti-inflammatory at scheduled times, and the narcotic as needed.
- The wrap and plaster splint should be left on until you come to fracture clinic to have your sutures removed.
- Please do simple finger and thumb exercises 2-3 times per day to minimize stiffness and swelling (drhaverstock.ca)
- Do not lift anything heavier than a dinner plate
- Elevation of the hand is very important to help the pain and swelling. Keep the hand up whenever you are able, and if you have pain or swelling (the higher the better, the sling does not help in this regard)
 - After 2 weeks, sutures are removed and switch to a removable splint
Gentle wrist and thumb ROM allowed, work to decrease swelling, focus on full finger ROM and 6 pack hand exercises
 - After 6 weeks, the bone has healed enough to resume basic activities and vigorous stretching.
 - 12 weeks post-op, unrestricted activity is allowed.
- It is normal to have some minor pain on the ulnar side of the wrist for up to 1 year after injury and this will improve gradually. Stiffness will lessen and strength will improve the more you use the hand.