

Ravi A Mahajani MBBS FRACS
Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon and Surgery of the Hand

Patient Information sheet for fingertip injuries and hand injuries in general including risks and complications

After the fingertip repair, nails usually take several months to grow but occasionally don't grow normally. This may leave an abnormal looking nail bed or spicules that need revision later. The skin heals over several weeks but if there is significant loss of tissue, the tip may be distorted or may be sensitive. The nerves may take several weeks to months to settle. Hand therapy and massage is helpful. Revision operations may sometimes be required. The practice will help manage you in the post op phase.

Skin loss or skin injuries, wounds may get infected and need antibiotics. Skin loss may need skin grafts or flaps to repair. Skin wounds may scar and scars may contract requiring secondary release.

Tendon injuries, depending on the state of the tendon and repair, a period of hand therapy from 1-3 months is required. A hand therapist will help you. Tendons may not re break or stick to other structures after the repair and this may require further surgical correction. Often the repair may not restore the hand back to the original state.

Fractures or Joint injuries

Some fractures require operation, others just splinting. Operation usually involves fixation with pins plates or screws. These are permanent or temporary. Sometimes permanent metalwork requires removal if there are problems with mal alignment, shifting, infection, extrusion, or a plate is sticking to other structures. Hand therapy and splinting is required after fracture fixation. Fractures take several weeks to recover with serial x rays to monitor.

If a nerve injury occurs it is repaired where possible. Nerve injury and repair may leave the finger numb or with an altered sensation. It may cause the finger to be painful longer than the usual 2-6 weeks. Sometimes nerves are just bruised and usually take 6 weeks to recover. If a nerve is cut and repaired, it may take several years to occur. The nerve recovery may not be complete.

Complex Sympathetic Nerve Pain

Very rarely with any hand injury, the nerves become hypersensitive and create a painful situation that is difficult to treat. This is most uncommon but we always advise of this as it is a severe consequence of any hand operation. It needs time and medication to help heal.

Realistic expectations from surgery

It is important for your expectations to be realistic. We will try as far as possible , within the constraints of your physical health, the nature of the problem, and your wishes to help you achieve your goals. The surgeon cannot guarantee all expectations and nor can guarantee the long lasting effect as the ageing process continues and there may be other variations. Sometimes other procedures are required, and infrequently sometimes severe complications are encountered. We will endeavour to the best of our ability to help you where possible. Rarely, it may be required to seek the help of other specialists. If you however have any concerns at any time please feel free to contact the practice. You are always entitled to second opinions at any stage and we are happy to help facilitate this for you if you so desired.

Northern Plastic Surgery (NT) Ph. 89814500 Fax. 89814399 email. admin@npsdarwin.com.au
www.npsdarwin.com.au