

## **Thumb Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) or Radial Collateral Ligament Repair (RCL) with Internal Brace Post-Op Protocol**

### **IMMEDIATELY POST-OP**

- Keep splint clean and dry. Do not stick anything down or inside the splint. Keep dressing and splint clean and dry.
- Leave splint and dressing in place. Do not get the splint wet.
- Ice and elevate for pain control and swelling.
- No lifting or weight bearing through the operative arm
- Ok to work on hand and finger motion once block wears off.
- Take all medications as prescribed.

**Call the office (616-396-5855) with any questions or concerns.**

### **POST-OP WEEK 1**

- First follow-up visit is in this week.
- Will remove splint and transition to a hand based custom thermoplastic splint.
- **Brace is to be worn full time.** May remove for shower/hygiene purposes.
- No soaking or submerging the wound.
- Continue to ice and elevate for pain control and swelling.
- Edema control per therapist.

**No gripping or pinching activities.**

### **POST-OP WEEK 2 – 4**

- Continue custom splint full-time except for shower/hygiene purposes.
- Begin scar massage and desensitization exercises.
- Continue with edema control per therapist.
- Ok to start on wrist range of motion, digit range of motion and thumb IP joint motion within the constraints of the splint.

**No gripping or pinching activities.**

### **POST-OP WEEK 5 – 6**

- Start active and passive range of motion exercises of the thumb out of the splint without stress to the UCL/RCL repair.
- Continue edema control, scar massage and desensitization exercises.

**No gripping or pinching activities or activities that stress the UCL/RCL.**

### **POST-OP WEEK 6 – 8**

- Wean out of custom splint for light activities.
- Continue to work on active and passive ROM of the thumb.
- Start strengthening avoiding stress/strain across UCL/RCL repair.

**Continue splint for activities that require weighted resistance or sustained power gripping/pinching.**

### **POST-OP WEEK 9 – 12**

- Continue with range of motion and strengthening exercises.
- Start with light/gentle pinching and gripping activities.

**Brace only needed for heavy/weighted activities or sustained gripping/pinching activities until sufficient strength achieved.**

### **POST-OP WEEK 12+**

- Out of brace completely.
- Continue with strengthening as needed with no restrictions.
- Home program if needed to meet goals.
- Resume normal activities of daily living as tolerated.