

# Dr. Verheyden Instructions after Xiaflex Injection

## Appearance:

- Every single patient develops swelling, bruising, and tenderness from the enzyme.
- This is a surgery, but we used an enzyme instead of a knife.
- 20-30% of patients develop swelling, discomfort, and bruising in their elbow and/or armpit area.

## Pain:

- 650 mg of Tylenol, if no contraindications, 3-4 hours after the local anesthetic given.
- The local anesthetic typically wears off in 6-8 hours.
- Alternate Tylenol with Ibuprofen, Aleve, or another NSAID, if no contraindications, and continue for two to three days.
- Ice and elevate.
- A frozen can or bottle fits nicely in your hand and can be used to decrease swelling and discomfort.

## Activity:

- Take it easy with your hand the first week.
- Avoid forceful gripping or squeezing activity. No tennis or golf.
- Follow up with Dr. Verheyden 2 weeks after the manipulation for repeat evaluation.

## Skin splits:

- Sometimes the skin splits open at time of manipulation. This is common, especially when the contracture was severe before the enzyme injection.
- The Hand Team will apply the first dressing in the office. You will do additional dressing changes as needed.
- Cover the skin split with Xeroform (yellow petroleum non-adherent) and a soft bulky dressing. Start soaks with warm water and Epsom salts the day after manipulation, twice a day for 5-10 minutes.
- You can reuse the piece of Xeroform for several days. Xeroform has antibacterial properties and retains its non-adherent properties for several days.
- Place a small amount of Epsom salts, (roughly a teaspoon of Epsom salts), in a small bowl of water. Massage and work on finger range of motion exercises during the warm water Epsom soak.
- The first dressing change is always the worst. Every dressing change after that gets easier.
- Skin splits heal from inside out and typically close and heal over the course of a few days to a couple weeks depending of the size of the skin split.
- Dr. Verheyden has never had to place sutures, or do another procedure, to close the skin splits. He has seen over 1,000 skin splits after these manipulations. All have healed. Some look quite ugly. Skin splits are common.
- The skin split does have some advantages in that it facilitates getting swelling and fluid out of your palm and fingers after then enzyme injection, which accelerates your range of motion recovery, and the skin split heals with new skin in this more open position.
- Keep the skin split/wounds clean and avoid getting them dirty to minimize the risk for infection.

- No hot tubs, dishes, or swimming until the skin split heals.

### **Stretching Exercises:**

- It is very important that you perform the stretching exercises for one minutes every hour that you are awake until your two-week post Xiaflex injection appointment
- Work on aggressive edema control and finger range of motion exercises, working on the finger "pump handle" mechanism to decrease swelling and edema in the finger.

### **Three Key Exercises:**

1. Massage in the palm and over the fingers to decrease swelling and desensitize the nerves.
  - If you do not massage these areas, the fingers and palm actually get more tender and sensitive.
  - You will cause no harm by aggressively massaging the fingers and palm. Not massaging results in more tenderness and sensitivity as the nerve fibers initiate a feedback loop cycle. Break the nerve sensitivity and pain cycle by massaging and desensitizing the palm and fingers.
2. Make a tight full fist with all the fingers
  - Work to maximally flex the finger into a full fist
  - Remember the pump handle. Push the pump handle all the way down.
  - Use your other hand to squeeze the fingers into a full fist and milk out the swelling.
3. Straighten all the fingers fully
  - Remember the "C" maneuver; maximally flex the wrist and the MCP joint to relax the powerful muscles on the palmar side of the forearm. Then fully extend each finger at the PIP joint.
  - Remember the pump handle analogy. Push the pump handle all the way up and all the way down. If you ever used an old well pump, you know that you can only get water from the well if you bring the pump handle all the way up and all the way down. Think of your fingers as a well pump and "pump" all the blood and fluid back to the heart several times every hour that you are awake, every day until your two-week visit.

### **Splint:**

- If Dr. Verheyden gave you a splint, wear the thermoplastic extension splint at night, every night, for the first 2 weeks.
- Remember to place padding under the fingertips to "shim" the fingers in full extension.
- Just wear the splint at night. During the day, wear a soft dressing as needed, and do your three exercises for one minute every hour that you are awake.

### **Recurrence of Disease:**

- Remember, this is a disease and 50% of the time, the disease comes back.
- The beautiful thing with the enzyme is if the disease come back, you just inject it again and the enzyme is so much simpler, easier, and less expensive than surgery.