



erlanger

Origination 02/2026

Last Approved 08/2026

Effective 08/2026

Last Revised 08/2026

Next Review 08/2029

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Applicability Erlanger
Health -
Baroness

Digital Amputation and Replantation Practice Management Guideline

1. Process/Procedure Description

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for managing digital amputations and consideration for replantation.

2. Who Should Read This Process/Procedure?

Trauma Attendings, Trauma Residents, Emergency Department Physicians, Emergency Department Residents, Hand Surgeons, Orthopedic Residents, Plastic Reconstruction Service Attendings, Plastic Reconstruction Service Residents

3. Process/Procedure

Process Instructions/Description:

General Information

Erlanger Medical Center is not a regional referral center for digital replantation. Specific transfer requests for replantation should be referred to a regional digital transplant center. Currently, these centers exist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (Tennessee), Grady Memorial Hospital (Georgia), and University of Louisville's Christine Kleinert Hand Center (Kentucky).

Transfer requests for replantation evaluation from regional referral facilities should follow current policy for hand injury referral.

Emergency Department Management of Digital Amputations

The Baroness ED will serve as the site of digital replant evaluation. Initial hand trauma evaluation will follow standard of care guidelines. Review for the handling of the amputated digit(s) will be undertaken.

- A. The amputated digit(s) will be wrapped in gauze moistened with normal saline solution.
- B. The wrapped digit(s) will be placed into a plastic bag.
- C. The plastic bag will be placed on ice.

After patient stabilization, consultation will be obtained with the UTHSC - Chattanooga Plastic or Orthopedic Surgery resident covering Hand Surgery.

Hand Surgery Consultation

The Hand Surgery resident will evaluate the patient and communicate with the attending hand surgeon. The hand surgery resident should both photograph and video the injured hand as well as amputated digit(s) as described above. Anesthesia of the injured hand will be performed appropriately to provide patient comfort. The decision to proceed with consultation for replantation is made by the attending hand surgeon. This decision is communicated to the ED Attending by the resident surgeon covering hand surgery present in the Emergency Department.

Consideration for Replantation

- A. Thumb amputations should be considered for replantation.
- B. Multiple digit amputations (2 or more) should be considered for replantation.
- C. Single digits are not considered for replantation unless the patient is a child.
- D. The general health of the patient will be evaluated for contraindications to general anesthesia of at least four hours.

4. References:

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
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VP Approval	Jessica Holladay: VP & CNO Surg & Trauma Svcs	08/2026
Trauma Services Committee Approval	Stephanie Spain: Trauma Prgm Mgr Adult	08/2026
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Applicability

Erlanger Health - Baroness

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