



Post-Operative Instructions

Once your surgery is completed, you must follow all the instructions given to you in order to heal properly and have a good outcome. The following instructions are your obligation. Use this as a checklist of progress as you heal. Included are normal post-surgical experiences and key health considerations.

Day of Surgery

You will only be released to the care of a responsible adult. All of these instructions must be clear to the adult who will monitor your health and support you in the first 24-48 hours following surgery.

Rest: Rest is important in the early stages of healing, equally important is that you are ambulatory: *walk every 3-4 hours (even during the night) to insure circulation the first 24 hours after surgery.* Have your caregiver help you, and use caution.

Position after surgery and sleeping: Position after surgery you should be propped up with a few pillows under your head and one under your knees for support, for at least 48 hours after surgery. Most people find a recliner most comfortable. After 48 hours you may sleep flat on your back, you may *not* sleep on your stomach or sides for four weeks.

Fluids: Fluids are critical following surgery. Drinking fluids is very important to help rid the body of the drugs used in surgery. Clear juices and water are best.

Diet: Your diet should be light to start; such as warm soups, pudding, applesauce and yogurt. Please refrain from drinking alcohol for the next 24 hours as it dilates blood vessels and can cause unwanted bleeding.

Medications: Take all medications as prescribed, as reviewed during your pre-operative appointment. If you have any questions about them please call the office. If you do not need your narcotic pain medication you may instead take Tylenol for any pain. **No aspirin or ibuprofen.** Benadryl is also helpful for nausea and to help sleep.

Antibiotic: If prescribed an antibiotic, it should be started the evening **AFTER** surgery, with dinner.

Dressings: Keep dressings on, clean and dry. Your incisions will seep fluid and some blood for a short time after surgery. Do not remove any steri-strips.

Drains: Drains should be emptied 1-2 times a day, as needed. After recording the amount from each drain, squeeze the bulb and insert the cap to activate the suction. The bulb should stay compressed. You may notice that there can be a little drainage around where the drain enters your skin. Remember, it is a lot of fluid and a little drop of blood.

Garment: Your surgical garment/binder/bra should be worn at all times 24/7 for the next 4 weeks, except when in the shower, which is a good time to clean it! It should be snug, but not painful. You may use gauze or a pad to cover the incision under the garment/binder/bra if this is more comfortable for you.

Shower: You may shower two days post-operatively. Before showering make sure your caregiver is close by to help if needed. No bathtub, hot tub or swimming for 2 weeks.

Cold Compresses: To alleviate any discomfort and to reduce swelling you may apply cool/cold compresses to the treated region. Ice packs must be wrapped in a towel before being applied. Do not apply ice or anything frozen directly to the skin. Apply cool/cold compresses in 20 minute intervals.

Exercise: Do not engage in exercise. Do not lift anything over 5 pounds for the next 5 weeks. Light walking is allowed after the 3rd postoperative week. We will let you know each week what you can be doing. Absolutely no strenuous exercises or activity for the next 5 weeks. This also ***includes but not limited to: vacuuming, grocery shopping, without assistance, heavy loads of laundry and sexual activity.***

Driving: you may drive in approximately 5-7 days – with caution. Do not drive if you are taking pain narcotics. You must be able to operate the car safely.

Office Visits: You will be seen in the office 1-3 days post operatively, someone must drive you to that appointment. Then, expect to be seen on a weekly basis for 4-6 weeks. Follow-up visits are your responsibility until cleared by your physician.

Other: _____

Typical Post Operative Symptoms:

- Tightness, stiffness, swelling in treated area.
- Tingling, burning or intermittent shooting pain.
- Hypersensitivity or lack of sensitivity. (should gradually resolve over time)
- Shiny or itchy feeling skin.
- Sleep disruption: your normal sleep pattern should return in gradually.
- Asymmetry: your body is not symmetrical expect to heal and look different on each side of our body.

Call the office immediately if you experience any of the following:

- A high fever (anything over 101° F).
- Severe nausea and vomiting.
- Bright red skin that is streaking up or down your bandages and is hot to touch.
- Severe pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication, when taking as prescribed.
- Swelling that is much greater on one side than the other.
- Excessive bleeding or excessive fluid seeping through the incision.

I have read and understand all of the above instructions. I understand that following these instructions is solely my responsibility. I understand that it is also my responsibility to ask my doctor and his or her staff any questions I have related to these instructions or about my procedure, health and healing.

Patient Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Witness: _____