

Post-operative Instructions

YOU MAY NOT BE ALONE THE FIRST 24 HRS AFTER SURGERY

- Many patients leave the surgical facility drowsy, unaware, and forgetful for several hours after leaving. The anesthesia can cause a temporary amnesia that wears off in several hours, although most patients report no awareness of this. Regardless of how good you feel, a responsible adult should be prepared to take you home and stay with you the first 24 hours to assist you.
- If needed, we will be happy to assist you in making arrangements with a nursing service or an overnight stay at a nursing facility for observation.*

*Overnight stays at a nursing facility are for observational care. This is not an Acute Care facility. Care is predominately performed by LPN's and CNA's. The staff will be given instructions from your doctor for medications and observational care. The facility takes care of post-operative rehabilitation patients and long term residents.

DRIVING

- You will be seen in our office 1 day after surgery for a post-operative follow up visit. **DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF** to this appointment. Do not drive for the first 24 hours after surgery and while you are taking pain medication (narcotics). The doctor will advise when you will be able to resume driving.

SLEEPING

- Sleep on your back at a 30 degree angle (in a reclining chair or propped up on several pillows in bed) for 7 days after surgery. This assists in reducing swelling. Avoid side and stomach positions. Try your sleeping arrangement prior to surgery in order to allow time to make adjustments. Difficulty sleeping should be discussed with your doctor or the nursing staff.

ICING

- Apply cold compresses (gel packs provided to you) to the surgical areas at intervals of **20 minutes out of each hour** that you are awake.
- You must ice the surgical areas for a minimum of **72 hours** while your swelling and bruising are peaking to decrease your pain and increase your comfort.
- Avoid placing the ice packs directly on your skin. Make sure there is a barrier between your skin and the ice packs (such as a washcloth or pillowcase).

ACTIVITY

- No lifting, bending over, pulling or pushing for 7 to 10 days after surgery, including housework.
- No cardiovascular exercise for 3 weeks after surgery, including walking for exercise.
- No direct sunbathing or tanning beds for at least 3 weeks after surgery. Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months. Always use a strong sunblock if sun exposure is unavoidable. No spray tanning for 3 weeks after surgery.
- No soaking in any type of water (baths, pools, hot tubs, oceans, etc.) for at least 3 weeks (showers or sponge baths only).
- No acupuncture or deep massage for 3 weeks.
- Walk around the house every 2-3 hours to encourage circulation.

EATING AND DRINKING

- You will need to eat and drink as soon as you can after your arrival at home.
- You must have food in your stomach before taking your pain medications. Peanut butter, crackers, toast, Gatorade or Sprite are a good start. Avoid citrus and dairy products if you are nauseated.

- Patients having facial and nasal surgery should avoid foods that require heavy chewing (such as steak and salad) for the first week.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages for 10 days after surgery.
- Avoid any type of nicotine exposure for 3 weeks after surgery to avoid delayed wound healing problems.

HEALING

- During your initial post-operative period (2 to 3 weeks) you may experience:
 - Headache, nausea, pain and burning around the surgical areas, muscle aches, sore throat
 - Swelling and bruising around the surgical areas that comes and goes
 - Slowing of your bowel habits; take stool softeners or laxatives as needed
 - Fatigue with activities and feeling “blue” at times
- Proper aftercare can reduce your recovery time and increase your comfort. Please follow the surgery specific post-operative instructions provided to ensure proper healing.

CALL THE DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- A fever above 101 degrees
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- A hematoma (abnormal bleeding under the skin that causes rapid and severe swelling and pain)
- Inability to urinate within 8 to 10 hours

Our answering service receives calls after hours. Call (941) 366-8897 and leave a message with the operator and the doctor will call you back.