

Discharge Instructions after General Anesthesia

- Pain medication has been prescribed for you. If you have been given an indwelling nerve block, begin taking pain medication on post-operative night number 2. You may begin taking it sooner if the nerve block has begun to wear off. Take your pain medication approximately 45-60 minutes prior to the removal of your nerve block.
 - **Shoulder/arm nerve block: You may have mild shortness of breath, numbness on the side of the face after the nerve block, this is normal.**
 - **If you've had a nerve block On-Q pain ball for your shoulder, sleeping in a reclined position is best to facilitate optimal medication distribution.**
 - **Knee nerve block: Do not put pressure on the operative leg until the block has completely worn off.**
- Use your pain medication as directed over the first 48 hours **after** you begin taking it and then begin to taper your use. You may supplement the pain medications with over the counter Advil (Ibuprofen, Motrin), Aleve (Naproxen sodium) as needed for the first 5 days after surgery. **DO NOT TAKE TYLENOL (ACETAMINOPHEN) UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE OR USE ONE OR THE OTHER-NOT BOTH.**
- Pain medications (opioids) can cause constipation. You may use OTC Senakot, Colace, Miralax or stool softener of choice as needed. Increasing your water and fiber intake will be beneficial.
- You will receive compression socks at the surgery center. Please keep your compression socks on for the first 3 days to help prevent blood clots. These socks can be slippery so please wear socks or slippers with a non-skid surface.
- Once you are comfortable at home, it's important to practice deep breathing and coughing so that you'll be able to do the exercises below easily after surgery. These exercises will help your breathing, clear your lungs, and lower your risk of pneumonia.
 - Breathe deeply and cough every hour while you're awake for the first 2 to 3 days after surgery. These exercises work better if you do them sitting up.
- It's also important to move and change your position often. These position changes help to make your breathing and coughing exercises work better.

Deep Breathing Exercises

Do these exercises every hour when you're awake.

- Breathe in deeply and slowly through your nose, expanding your lower rib cage, and letting your abdomen move forward.
- Hold for a count of 3 to 5.
- Breathe out slowly and completely through pursed lips. Don't force your breath out.
- Rest and repeat 10 times every hour. Rest longer if you become dizzy or lightheaded.

Coughing Exercises

It's best to do coughing exercises when you're feeling comfortable. If you're lying on your back, bend your knees (if you can), and rest your feet on the bed.

Breathe in deeply and cough firmly. If you cough up some mucous, clear it into a tissue. Repeat the coughing until there isn't any more mucous. If you have a lot of mucous, you may need to take a break so you don't get too tired.

Foot and Leg Exercises

Do these exercises every hour while you're awake.

Ankle Pumps

- Pump your ankles up and down for 1 minute.
- Relax both feet.
- Repeat 5 times then relax.



B. Ankle Circles

- Circle both ankles; first to the right, and then to the left.
- Repeat 5 times then relax.



Bend each knee one at a time, sliding your foot up along the bed and then back down.

Repeat 5 times then relax.



Bandages and Shower

- The first time that you shower, it is a good idea to have someone “stand by” as the hot water, pain medication and the anesthesia can cause dizziness and lightheadedness.
- If you had arm or leg surgery, you will be provided with a shower shield at the surgery center. Please use this so that your bandages do not get wet. If your bandages or splint do get wet, please call our office to have them replaced.
- Shoulder/Total joints: You may shower 3 days after your surgery (after your nerve block is out). The incision(s) CANNOT get wet prior to 3 days or until the wound is dry. Remove all of the dressings and let the shower water flow over the incisions, do not scrub or use soap on the incision. Allow the water to wash over the site, do not scrub and then PAT dry. Do not rub the incision(s). Place new, clean dressing or bandaid over the incision (s).
 - Shoulder: Make sure your axilla (armpit) is completely dry after showering. You may use gauze or on a dry washcloth to help keep your armpit dry.
 - Knee: Make sure the area behind your knee is completely dry after showering.

Eating

- **Start slow!** There are no restrictions to your diet but the general anesthetic slows everything down. Starting with non-greasy, lower fat foods will keep your tummy happy.

Attend Physical Therapy as directed.

HAPPY RECOVERY!