

VATS/Thoracotomy Discharge Instructions

For a smooth recovery please follow these tips:

DIET:

It is important to eat well balanced, healthy meals following your surgery; this will help with wound healing. If diabetic, sticking to a diabetic diet and controlling blood sugar is very important. Constipation is common and over the counter stool softeners and laxatives, such as Miralax, Milk of Magnesia, or Dulcolax, may be needed.

ACTIVITY:

You probably will not have the energy to be very active, so pace yourself. Surgery can take a lot of strength and energy out of you. At first, you will get tired easily but this will improve with time. Rest when you get tired. In 4-6 weeks you should be back to full activity.

EXERCISE:

Relaxation and deep breathing exercises must be done to help expand your lungs and to help clear them of mucus. The Hospital staff will teach you how to do these exercises at home.

Use your incentive spirometer at home and take 10-15 breaths an hour with it, while awake. Keep using the incentive spirometer until your follow-up visit in our office.

Take short walks outside each day if weather permits. Walking is excellent exercise. Taking deep breaths while walking will increase your strength.

MEDICATIONS:

Take pain medicine as prescribed. You may also use Tylenol and Ibuprofen with your prescribed pain medicines if you do not have kidney or liver problems. If you need a refill, please call my office with your prescription and pharmacy information at least 24 hours prior to running out of medication.

You may use a heating pad on medium heat for about 15-20 minutes several times a day to help alleviate your pain. Do not sleep with the heating pad on. If you need medication refills, other than pain medication, please call your pulmonologist or PCP.

SLEEPING:

Try to get eight hours of sleep each night. You may have trouble sleeping for the first few weeks you are home but this will get better as you heal and become more active. Sleep in any position you find comfortable.

SHOWERING:

Shower and wash your incisions with soap and water every day. Pat the incisions dry.

INCISIONS:

You may feel tightness, itching, numbness, or tingling around the incision for up to 3 months.
You may have stitches or staples in the incision; these will be removed at your office follow-up visit.

CALL YOUR SURGEON:

Call your surgeon's office right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 101 degrees F.
- Incision becomes red, hot to the touch, or swollen.
- Incision starts to drain.

NOTE:

We DO NOT complete any disability paperwork. Please contact your PCP or pulmonologist for this purpose.
We DO complete FMLA forms. There is a \$25.00 fee for completion of FMLA paperwork and we require a 7 day turn-around time for this.

Please contact our office if you have any questions.

William M. Davis, M.D.
Chad N. Stasik, M.D.

James R. Garrison Jr., M.D.

R. Brent New
Leopoldo Zorrilla, M.D.

Chris Mathis, MCS Inc.