

## Generalized Post- Operative Instructions

### PAIN:

It's completely normal to have post- operative pain, muscle spasms, numbness or tingling. These symptoms should gradually resolve as your muscles and nerves heal. Numbness and tingling are usually the last symptoms to resolve, since nerves take the longest to heal (weeks or months). Gentle ice packs for the first 5 days to the incision site will help decrease swelling and pain. It's common to have a sore throat after endotracheal intubation.

### WHEN TO CALL OUR OFFICE:

- Fever over 101.5
- Difficulty Breathing or Chest Pain
- Sudden increase in severe pain, numbness or weakness
- Loss of bowel or bladder control
- Foul odor or puss filled drainage from your incision
- Increasing redness around incision site
- If the office is closed and you cannot reach an On- Call Physician, go to the nearest Emergency Room for evaluation.

### INCISION CARE:

- Keeping your incision dry will decrease your chance of developing an infection. You may shower in 3-5 days after surgery. Please wait 3-4 weeks to soak in a bathtub or spa.
- Keep incision covered with a bandage for the first 5 days after surgery. You may remove gauze dressing to shower. After, pat dry and re- apply new gauze dressing.
- Change gauze dressing daily
- You may notice small steri- stitches over the incision as well. Do not remove these, they will loosen and fall off in 5-10 days. If they are still on by your 2-3 week post operative appointment they will be removed in the office.
- If you have staples these will be removed at your post- operative appointment.

### MEDICATION:

- Take all of your medication as ordered. You do not have to take pain medication unless it is needed.
- Do not use alcohol while taking pain medication.
- Pain medication may cause constipation. Increase your fiber intake and stay hydrated. Otherwise you may try an over the counter stool softener.
- All of you medications may be refilled during normal business hours (8am- 5pm M-T, 8am-12 noon Friday). Please notify your pharmacy if you need refills before your return appointment. Allow 24-48 hours for completion.

### SMOKING:

- If you use tobacco products, it's in your best interest to stop. Nicotine constricts blood vessels and decreases blood flow to your operative site. This decreases your bodies' ability to heal and increases your chances of having a poor surgical outcome and chronic pain.

### ACTIVITY:

- Do not lift anything over 10 lbs until you are seen at your first post- operative appointment 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- Avoid twisting, turning, stooping, bending or reaching over your head for 6 weeks.
- Walk daily and gradually increase your distance and light activities each day.
- Do not drive until you are released at your post- operative appointment.
- Wear your cervical or lumbar brace as directed by the doctor.
- If physical therapy is advised, it will be started after your post- operative check up.

Please call us for other questions or concerns  
972-943-9779