



## **PERI ANESTHESIA CARE DEPARTMENT- SURGICAL SERVICES**

### **PATIENT'S Post General Anesthesia DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **Discharge Instructions: After Your Surgery**

You've just had surgery. During surgery you were given medicine called anesthesia to keep you relaxed and free of pain. After surgery you may have some pain or nausea. This is common. Here are some tips for feeling better and getting well after surgery.

#### **Going home**

Your doctor or nurse will show you how to take care of yourself when you go home. He or she will also answer your questions. Have an adult family member or friend drive your home. For the first 24 hours after your surgery:

- Do not drive or use heavy equipment.
- Do not make important decisions or sign legal papers.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Have someone to stay with you, if needed. He or she can look for problems and help keep you safe.

Be sure to go to the follow-up visits with your doctor and rest after your surgery for as long as your doctor tells you to.

#### **Coping with pain**

If you have pain after surgery, pain medicine will help you feel better. Take it as told, before pain becomes severe. Also, ask your doctor or pharmacist about other ways to control pain. This might be with heat, ice, or relaxation. And follow any other instructions your surgeon or nurse gives you.

#### **Tips for taking pain medicine**

To get the best relief possible, remember these points:

- Pain medicines can upset your stomach. Taking them with a little food may help.
- Most pain relievers taken by mouth need at least 20 to 30 minutes to start work.
- Taking medicine on a schedule can help you remember to take it. Try to time your medicine so that you can take it before starting an activity. This might be before you get dressed, go for a walk, or sit down for dinner.

- Constipation is a common side effect of pain medicines. Call your doctor before taking any medicines such as laxatives or stool softeners to help ease constipation. Also ask if you should skip any food. Drinking lots of fluids and eating foods such as fruits and vegetables that are high in fiber can also help. Remember, do not take laxatives unless your surgeon has prescribed them.
- Drinking alcohol and taking pain medicine can cause dizziness and slow your breathing. It can even be deadly. Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medicine.
- Pain medicine can make you react more slowly to things. Do not drive or run machinery while taking pain medicine.

### **Call your surgeon if...**

- You still have pain an hour after taking medicine. The medicine may not be strong enough.
- You feel too sleepy, dizzy, or groggy. The medicine may be too strong.
- You have side effects like nausea, vomiting, or skin changes, such as rash, itching, or hives.

### **If you have obstructive sleep apnea**

You were given anesthesia during surgery to keep you comfortable and free of pain. After surgery, you may have more apnea spells because of this medicine and other medicines you were given. The spells may last longer than usual.

At home:

- Keep using the continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device when you sleep. Unless your health care provider tells you not to use it when you sleep, day or night. CPAP is a common device used to treat obstructive sleep apnea.
- Talk with your provider before taking any pain medicine, muscle relaxants, or sedatives. Your provider will tell you about the possible dangers of taking these medicines.

### When seeking medical care

Call your healthcare provider if you have any of the following:

- More pain, redness, swelling, bleeding, or foul-smelling discharge around the incision area (**Signs or symptoms of infection**)
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Shaking chills
- Vomiting or nausea that doesn't go away
- Numbness, coldness, or tingling around the incision area, or changes in skin color
- Opening of the sutures or wound