

## ***General postoperative instructions***

Dr. Marcincuk's general postoperative instructions:

### **After surgery:**

- All patients will go home with surgery specific instructions at the time of discharge. If at any time, you do not understand these instructions, or if you have questions or problems that arise, do not hesitate to call us.
- Remember, you must have a responsible adult available to drive you home from the facility for any outpatient procedures. You will not be allowed to drive yourself, and will not be allowed to take public transportation.
- You must have a responsible adult stay with you for a minimum of 24 hours after surgery. This is to reduce the risk of falling, reduce the risk of improper use of medications, and to ensure your safety and comfort.
- On the day of surgery, you may feel dizzy. Therefore it is important to have someone help you move around, even if you feel "wide awake".
- If you have persistent nausea lasting more than 6 hours, or that interferes with holding down fluids, call the doctor. Realize that pain medicine taken on an empty stomach is a very common cause of nausea after surgery. Take some fluids or soft foods with the pain medicine to prevent this.

### **Diet:**

- Specific dietary guidelines and restrictions will be given to you at the time of discharge.
- In general, it is important to maintain proper hydration by drinking more than your normal amount of fluids.
- The medications used in anesthesia can cause your stomach to be more sensitive than usual. In addition to your specific dietary restrictions, you should plan on avoiding things that are rich, fatty, fried, creamy, or "heavy" for the first 24 hours.
- For patients having throat surgery, swallowing may be easier about 30minutes after taking the pain medicine.
- For patients put on a soft diet postoperatively, this generally includes: ice cream, mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, yogurt, apple sauce, popsicles, oatmeal, soup, pudding, bananas, canned peaches, etc.
- For all patients, avoid smoking for two weeks after surgery. The use of tobacco products can cause significant problems with wound healing.
- For all patients, avoid consumption of alcohol for at least 24 hours after surgery, and as long as prescription pain medications are being used.

**Medications:**

- Many patients will have antibiotics and pain medicine ordered. Some patients may have other medicines as well. Take your medicine as instructed.
- You should not stop antibiotics without first talking to your doctor. This can cause an increased risk of severe infection or severe bodily reaction if not taken for a proper duration.
- You should not stop any steroid medications without talking to Dr. Marcincuk first. This can cause a severe, dangerous body reaction if not tapered properly.
- If any medications are giving you side effects, call the doctor as she may be able to give you instructions to lessen these effects.
- If any medications cause you to feel generalized itching, wheezing, tightness in the throat, or cause a rash to develop, stop them immediately and call the doctor immediately. This may be a sign of an allergic reaction.
- If you have persistent nausea lasting more than 6 hours, or that interferes with holding down fluids, and have not been given an anti-nausea medication, call the doctor. Realize that pain medicine taken on an empty stomach is a very common cause of nausea after surgery. Take some fluids or soft foods with the pain medicine to prevent this.
- Remember that prescription pain medication can slow down the digestive process, leading to constipation. If this is a concern, or if you have not had a bowel movement within 48 hours after surgery, you may take an over the counter laxative such as Milk of Magnesia, Colace, or Dulcolax (or their generic equivalents). Ask your pharmacist to help you find these and other medications on the shelf. If constipation becomes a problem, call us for further advice.

**Do not take:**

Do not take any over the counter medicines at the same time you take your prescription medicine without first talking to your doctor. Many prescription pain medicines contain Acetaminophen (Tylenol). Taking additional over the counter medicines may cause an overdose of Tylenol, liver injury, or a bad reaction.

Do not take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or aspirin products after surgery without first talking to your doctor. These can lead to an increased risk of bleeding after surgery.

**School, work, and activities:**

- Dr. Marcincuk will give you guidelines as to how long you should expect to stay home from work or school. Do not return to work or school until you no longer need the prescription pain medicine.
- Do not drive while taking the prescription pain medication.
- For patients having neck surgery, you should also not drive until you feel that you can move your neck well and your range of motion is not restricted.
- For most surgeries, no sports, gym class, rough activities, lifting, pushing, or pulling for 2 weeks after surgery. Some surgeries may have longer restrictions.
- Do not stay out in the hot summer sun (even if you are just resting) for at least 2 weeks after surgery. Similarly, no hot tub or sauna for one month after surgery.
- For patients having certain types of nasal or facial surgery, you may be given instructions to avoid blowing your nose.
- In most cases, we recommend that you do not travel out of town for 2 weeks after surgery. If you travel far away, our ability to help you in the event that a problem arises will be very limited.
- Most neck incisions can be wet in the shower about 3 days after surgery. Remember not to scrub the incision as this can cause sutures to break. Do not submerge the incision in a bath or pool until cleared by Dr. Marcincuk.
- For most patients, elevation of the head of bed will help reduce pain and swelling.

**Followup:**

- Dr. Marcincuk will give you instructions for followup at the time of discharge.
- Generally, you will need to call the office to schedule an appointment in the time frame given.
- For patients with sutures:
  - o Dr. Marcincuk tries to use dissolvable sutures whenever possible. These are generally a tan/light brown color. They do not need to be removed.
  - o For patients who have sutures to be removed, generally a blue or black color, please follow up in the time frame recommended at the time of discharge. Sutures left in too long can cause problems with the healing process.
- For patients who are discharge with nasal splints or packing, it is imperative to followup when recommended to have this removed. Otherwise, there is an increased risk of infection and poor wound healing.
- For patients having ear surgery, your ear-specific instructions will be outlined at the time of discharge. In most cases, you will need to keep your ear canal dry - except for the use of ear drops – until told otherwise.

**When to call Dr. Marcincuk:**

- If you cough, vomit, or spit up more than a teaspoon of fresh, red, bloody drainage. Call immediately day or night.
- Fever of 101 or higher within the first 2 weeks of surgery.
- Uncontrolled pain or nausea, the inability to drink fluids, or for a drop off in the amount of urine made.
- Any other concerning problems or questions. We are here to help you and would much rather be called for something simple, than to not be called for something that turns out to be important. ***When in doubt, call.***