

Lung Resection Discharge Instructions

Always follow your surgeon's specific instructions.

Incision Care

- Wash your incision daily with antibacterial soap and water.
- Do not peel off the steri-strips. They may fall off on their own. You may remove these 7 days after your discharge.

Chest tube site

- Keep the dressing over the chest tube site for 2 days.
- Once the dressing is removed, wash daily.
- If there is still drainage, wash the site with soap and water. Cover the site with a clean gauze and tape. Change the dressing daily until there is no drainage.
- If drainage soaks through the dressing at any time change to a clean, dry dressing.

Activity

- No baths or swimming for 4 to 6 weeks. You may take showers.
- **Do not** lift anything over 10 pounds with both of your arms for 4 to 6 weeks. Do not strain in any way.
- You may resume sexual activity when you wish.
- You may resume driving 2 weeks after surgery. Do not drive while taking pain medicines.
- Walk and move around. Increase the distance and time daily.
- Do breathing exercises (incentive spirometer and acapella) several times a day 4 to 6 weeks as instructed.
- Do arm exercise for 4 to 6 weeks as instructed.
- **Do not** smoke. Avoid second hand smoke.

Diet

- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Drink at least eight 8 ounce glasses of water a day.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medicine.

Bowel Management

- Pain medicines can cause constipation.
- Try to have a bowel movement every 1 to 2 days.
- Do not strain while having a bowel movement.
- Get an over the counter laxative to soften your stools, like Miralax or magnesium citrate. Take as directed.
- Stop the stool softeners if you are having loose stools.
- If you still have constipation or diarrhea call the Thoracic Center.

Precautions

Call your doctor right away, or go to the nearest emergency center if you have any of these signs or symptoms:

- Signs of infection: redness, swelling, tenderness, drainage or bad odor from surgical incision site(s)
- Fever greater than 101°F (38.3°C), chills
- Unrelieved nausea or vomiting
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Chest pain or heart palpitations

If you have any questions or concerns, call:

Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

1.800.MDA.BAPTIST

1.800.632.2278

References:

Held-Warmkessel, J., & Schiech, L. (2014). Non-small cell lung cancer. *Nursing*, 44(2), 32-43.
doi:10.1097/01.NURSE.0000441877.57254.95