

Discharge Instructions for Lobectomy of the Lung



You had a surgical procedure called an open lung or pulmonary lobectomy. This is the removal of a section (lobe) of one of your lungs. The right lung has three lobes and the left lung has two lobes. An open procedure includes making a large cut (incision) into the chest. It may affect the:

- Chest wall
- Muscles
- Ribs
- Membranes covering the lungs (pleura)
- Airways (bronchi)
- Lobes of the lungs

There are different reasons for having this surgery. The most common reason is lung cancer. It's possible to live without having all the lobes of your lungs. But your remaining lungs, your heart, and your whole body must adjust to this change.

Incision care

- Make sure you and your caregiver follow all instructions from your healthcare provider about caring for your surgical site. Ask your provider for instructions about showering and bathing.
- You may have a home health nurse help you change your dressing or bandage and help with your other needs. They will change the dressing and report any problems as instructed by your healthcare provider.

Activity

- You will notice that you get tired more easily. This is normal because your lungs and your heart have to work harder. Rest when you are tired. Prioritize your activities. Do the most important things when you feel the best.
- You may have been instructed to do exercises to increase the strength and movement in your arms and shoulders. These exercises are important with any surgery of the chest. Do the exercises as instructed.
- You may also have home physical and occupational therapy. The therapists help you with daily activities, movement, and exercise. These activities will help build your strength and endurance. Do these as instructed.
- Don't lift anything that's heavy. Ask your provider for a specific weight limit.
- Don't sit with your legs down or crossed for long periods of time.
- When lying down, use a few pillows to support your knees and lower legs.

Other home care

- Continue to take medicines as instructed to help lessen the pain. Make sure you know when you are supposed to take these medicines. Use a pill organizer box to help.

- While you are healing and taking pain medicines, don't drive.
- Keep in mind that pain medicines often cause constipation.
 - Use laxatives, stool softeners, or enemas as directed by your healthcare provider.
 - Drink water during the day, unless instructed to limit fluids.
 - Eat high-fiber foods, such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
 - Call your provider if your constipation becomes uncomfortable and treatments don't work.
- Use your incentive spirometer as instructed.
- Return to your diet as you feel able. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.
- Having a healthy diet helps you heal. Make sure you have lean meats, low- or no-fat dairy products, whole grains, and fruits and vegetables.
- Don't smoke and stay away from people who do. Don't let people smoke in your home, in your car, or around you. If you do smoke, talk with your healthcare provider about ways to quit.

Follow-up care

Follow up with your healthcare provider, or as advised. Call your healthcare provider if you have any concerns before your appointment.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if any of these occur:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Increased coughing or coughing up brown or bloody mucus
- More redness, swelling, or pain near your incision, or drainage from your incision
- Bleeding from your incision
- Nausea or vomiting
- Increased pain
- Shortness of breath
- Swelling in one or both legs
- Feeling like your heart is beating too fast (palpitations)
- Symptoms get worse or you have new symptoms

Call 911

Call **911** if any of these occur:

- Skin or lips turn blue, purple, or gray
- Feeling of doom
- Loss of consciousness or difficulty waking up

- Can't speak or talk
- Trouble breathing
- Sudden chest pain or chest tightness with shortness of breath
- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Severe bleeding

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