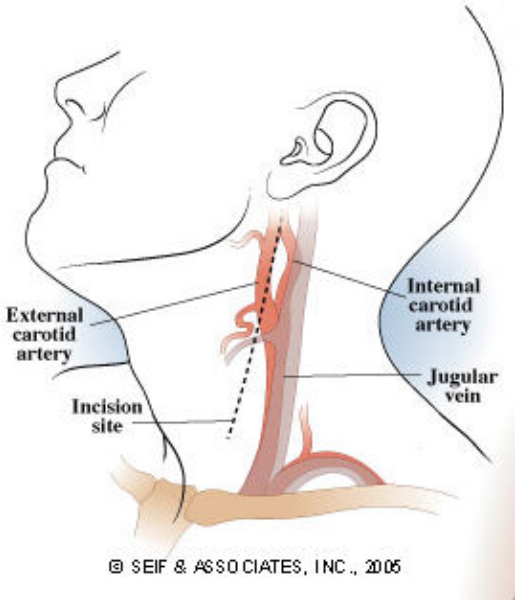
# Carotid Stenosis and Carotid Endarterectomy
## Care After Surgery

Refer to this sheet in the next few weeks. These discharge instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after you leave the hospital. Your caregiver may also give you specific instructions. Your treatment has been planned according to the most current medical practices available, but unavoidable complications sometimes occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, please call your caregiver.




### HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- It is normal to be sore for a couple weeks after surgery. See your caregiver if this seems to be getting worse rather than better.
- Take showers, not baths, for a few days after surgery or until instructed otherwise by your caregiver. **Do not** take baths or swim until directed by your surgeon.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- A blood thinner (*anticoagulant*) may be prescribed after surgery. This medicine should be taken exactly as directed.
- Change bandages (*dressings*) as directed by your caregiver.
- Resume your normal activities as directed by your caregiver.
- Avoid lifting until you are instructed otherwise.
- Make an appointment to see your caregiver for stitches (*suture*) or staple removal when instructed.
- **Stop smoking** if you smoke. This is a grave risk factor.
- Stop taking the pill (*oral contraceptives*) unless your caregiver recommends otherwise.
- Maintain good blood pressure control.
- Exercise regularly or as instructed.
- Lower blood lipids (cholesterol and triglycerides).
- Eat a heart-healthy diet. Manage heart problems if they are contributing to your risk.

### SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased bleeding from the wound.
- You notice redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- You notice swelling in your neck or have difficulty breathing or talking.
- You notice a bad smell or pus coming from the wound or dressing.
- You have an oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C).

### SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your initial symptoms are getting worse rather than better.
- You develop any abnormal bruising or bleeding.
- You develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing.
- You develop any reaction or side effects to medicine given.
- You develop chest pain, shortness of breath, or pain or swelling in your legs.
- You have a return of symptoms or problems that caused you to have this surgery.
- You develop a temporary loss of vision.
- You develop temporary numbness on one side.
- You develop a temporary inability to speak (*aphasia*).
- You develop temporary areas of weakness.

- **You have problems or concerns that have not been answered.**

**MAKE SURE YOU:**

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 01/01/2000 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.