Laparoscopic Splenectomy, Care After

Please read the instructions outlined below. Refer to these instructions for the next few weeks. These discharge instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after surgery. Your caregiver may also give you specific instructions. While your treatment has been planned according to the most current medical practices available, unavoidable complications sometimes occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, please call your caregiver.

PROCEDURE

After the procedure, the gas is released from inside your abdomen, and your incisions are closed with stitches *(sutures*). Because these incisions are small (usually less than one-half inch), there is usually minimal discomfort following the procedure. The recovery time, barring complications, is shortened. You will rest in a recovery room until you are stable and doing well. Following this, if there are no complications, you may be allowed to go home.

COMPLICATIONS

Some problems which sometimes happen after this procedure include:

- *Infection:* A germ starts growing in one of the wounds. This can usually be treated with antibiotics.
- *Bleeding* following surgery can be a complication of almost all surgeries. Your surgeon takes every precaution to keep this from happening.
- *Damage to other organs* may happen. If damage to other organs or excessive bleeding should happen it may be necessary to convert the laparoscopic procedure into an open abdominal procedure. Scarring (*adhesions*) from previous surgeries or disease may also be a cause to change this procedure to an open abdominal operation.
- *Overwhelming post-splenectomy infection* (OPSI). A rapidly fatal infection due to the absence of the spleen's protection against certain bacteria.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- It will be normal to be sore for a couple weeks following surgery. See your caregiver if this seems to be getting worse rather than better.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Use showers for bathing, until seen or as instructed.
- Change dressings if necessary or as directed.
- You may resume normal diet and activities as directed or allowed.
- Avoid lifting or driving until you are instructed otherwise.
- Make an appointment to see your caregiver for stitches (*suture*) or staple removal when instructed.
- You may use ice on your incision for 20 minutes, 4 times per day for the first 2 days.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have increased bleeding from wounds.
- You see redness, swelling, or have increasing pain in wounds.
- You have pus coming from your wound.
- You develop an unexplained temperature over 101° F (38.3° C).
- You have a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- You develop lightheadedness or feel faint.
- You are unable to pass gas or have a bowel movement.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.

- You have hard time breathing.
- You develop any reaction or side effects to medications given.

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