Pre-Surgical & Post-Surgical
Guidelines for Patients

These are general sets of instructions. Some guidelines do not apply when there is an emergency and an operation must be performed immediately. During such times, surgery is often performed under less than desirable circumstances and the best must be made of this.

PREPARING FOR SURGERY

- Stop herbal supplements two weeks Prior To Surgery (PTS).
- Stop smoking at least two weeks PTS. This lowers risk during surgery. Ask your doctor for help with this if needed. The benefits are well worth it. This is a good time for a healthy lifestyle change.
- Do not take aspirin within one week PTS unless instructed otherwise. Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Do not take anti-inflammatory medications (such as Advil® or Motrin® for example) for forty-eight hours PTS.
- **Notify your caregiver** if you have been on steroids (cortisone) within the past seven days whether taken by mouth or applied to the skin. **THIS IS CRITICAL.**
- Your caregiver will discuss **possible risks and complications** with you before surgery. In addition to the usual risks of anesthesia, other common risks and complications include:
  - Blood loss and replacement (not applicable to minor surgical procedures)
  - Temporary increase in pain due to surgery
  - Uncorrected pain or problems the surgery was meant to correct
  - Infection
  - New damage
- **For same day surgical patients** arrange for someone to take you home from the hospital and to stay with you for twenty-four hours after the procedure. Medicine given for your procedure may prevent you from driving a car or caring for yourself. If you have not made these arrangements, surgery may have to be canceled.
- Surgery will also be canceled if you fail to follow instructions before surgery.

THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY

- Eat your usual meals and a light supper. Continue fluid intake. No alcohol intake.
- Do not eat or drink after midnight. Your surgery will be canceled if you eat or drink after midnight. Take your usual medicine the morning of surgery with a sip of water unless instructed otherwise. Check with your caregiver if unsure.
- **Do not smoke.** The longer time smoking is stopped before surgery, the less likely you will be to have *pulmonary* (lung) problems after surgery.
- Call your doctor's office the morning prior to surgery if you develop an illness or problem which may prevent you from safely having your procedure.

THE MORNING OF SURGERY

- Take medicine as directed with a sip of water.
- Bathe or shower.
- Remove makeup, nail polish, or jewelry.
- Bring glasses or contact case. Dentures will be removed before surgery.
- Wear loose fitting clothing and low or no healed shoes.
- If you are a nursing mother ask the anesthetist how long you should wait before nursing again.
- Do not bring children without other another adult to be with them. Most medical centers are unable to provide for care and supervision of children.

BEFORE SURGERY

You should be present one hour prior to your procedure or as suggested by your doctor. Check in at the admissions desk or outpatient registration desk for filling out necessary forms if not pre-registered. There will be consent forms to sign prior to the procedure. There is a waiting area for your family while you are having surgery. Bring your insurance information with you. Do not bring valuables to the hospital.

LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies
- Medicine taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medications, and creams
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams)
- Previous problems with anesthetics or novocaine
- A family history of anesthetic problems.
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies
- History of blood clots (t*hrombophlebitis*)
- History of bleeding or blood problems
- Previous surgery
- Other health problems

FOLLOWING SURGERY

Same day surgery does not mean same day recovery. Healing will take some time. You will have tenderness at the operative site and there may be some swelling and bruising at the wound site or sites. You may have some nausea. The responsible adult who will take you home should arrange to stay with you the first 24 hours.

- Do not drive for twenty-four hours or until feeling normal again or **when instructed by your caregiver.** Do not drive while taking prescription pain medications.
- Do not consume alcoholic beverages.
- Do not make important decisions or sign legal documents. You may resume normal diet and activities as directed. Do no heavy lifting (more than 10 pounds) or playing of contact sports.
- Change dressings as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Keep all appointments as scheduled and follow all instructions.
- Ask questions if you do not understand something.
- Make sure that you and your family fully understand everything about your operation.
- Progressively return to your activity levels prior to surgery.

AFTER YOUR SURGERY

You will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will monitor your progress. When you are awake, stable, and taking fluids well, and barring complications, you will be allowed to go home. Once home, an ice pack applied to your operative site for fifteen or twenty minutes four times per day may help with discomfort and keep swelling down. You may have numbness at and around the site of the incision. You should not operate heavy machines (cars) the day after surgery and any time you are taking narcotics for pain control.

SEE YOUR CAREGIVER IF:

- You have increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from wounds or biopsy sites.
- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in wounds or biopsy sites.
- There is pus coming from wound.
- You develop an unexplained oral temperature over 101° F (38.3° C) develops, or as your doctor suggests.
- There is a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- You development lightheadedness or feeling faint.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF :

- You develop a rash.
- Have difficulty breathing.
- Develop allergies.

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