General Instructions for Surgery

These instructions are generic. They cover multiple surgeries and are a general pre-surgical guideline. They do not apply to all procedures. You may have questions. Answers will be provided by your caregiver.

PREPARING FOR SURGERY

- Stop smoking at least two weeks prior to surgery. This lowers risk during surgery. Ask your caregiver for help with this if needed. The benefits are well worth it. This is a good time for a healthy lifestyle change.
- Your caregiver may advise that you stop taking certain medications that may affect the outcome of the surgery and your ability to heal. For example, you may need to stop taking anti-inflammatories, such as aspirin or ibuprofen because of possible bleeding problems. Other medications may have interactions with anesthesia.
- BE SURE TO **LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW IF YOU HAVE BEEN ON STEROIDS** FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME. **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, or new damage.

BEFORE SURGERY

Arrive one hour prior to your procedure or as your caregiver suggests. Check in at the admissions desk to fill out necessary forms if you are 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 your procedure.

LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

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

FOLLOWING SURGERY

You will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will watch and check your progress. Once you are awake, stable, and taking fluids well, barring other problems you will be allowed to go home. Once home, an ice pack wrapped in a light towel applied to your operative site may help with discomfort and keep the swelling down. Follow instructions as suggested by your caregiver.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Follow your caregiver's instructions as to activities, exercises, physical therapy, or driving a car.
- Weight reduction may be helpful depending upon the type of surgery. For example, back surgery.
- Daily exercise is helpful. Maintain strength and range of motion as instructed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You notice increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from the wound.
- You soak more than four pads following a uterine procedure unless instructed otherwise.
- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- You notice pus coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature over 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.

- You become light headed or if you pass out (faint).

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing.
- You develop any allergic problems.

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