

Going Home After Your Thoracic Surgery

This handout offers information you need to manage your care after thoracic surgery. It is important you and your family member/partner-in-care also read the handout called “Your Lung Surgery”. This handout can also be found on the Lakeridge Health website at

www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/thoracicdau.asp

Your activity

- Do not lift anything more than 10 pounds (lbs) until your follow-up appointment with the surgeon.
- Do your deep breathing and coughing exercises until your follow-up appointment with the surgeon.
- Gradually increase your activity. Start with short walks.

Caring for your chest tube site (where your chest tube was removed)

- You may have a small amount of drainage from your chest tube site. This is normal.
- Remove the dressing covering your chest tube site 72 hours after it is removed.
- Remove the Steri-strips (paper tape over your incision) 10 days after your surgery.
- You do not have any sutures to be removed.

Having a shower/bath

- Shower: you can begin to have a shower after your chest tube dressing is removed.
- Bath: you can begin to have a bath 7 days after your surgery.

Your diet: what to eat/drink

If you had esophageal surgery

- Follow the diet sheet and instructions given to you by the dietitian.

For all other patients

- Eat your regular diet.
- Drink 6 to 8 cups of (1 cup = 250ml) fluids every day.
- Eat foods that include bran, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables to help prevent constipation. Natural laxatives such as prunes and prune juice may also help you have a bowel movement. Some pain medications and being less active may cause you to have constipation. Constipation is when you have a bowel movement less often than normal.

Managing your pain

- You may be given a prescription for pain medication(s) before you leave the hospital.
OR
Your surgeon may send the prescription directly to your pharmacy.
- The nurse will explain how and when to take the pain medication(s) prescribed for you.

Please follow the directions on your prescription. Talk to your pharmacist if you have any questions.

Your follow-up appointment

Call your surgeon's office to schedule a follow up appointment if it wasn't given to you before leaving the hospital. Do this when you get home from the hospital.

- For patients of Dr. Dickie, to be scheduled for 2 weeks after your surgery.
- For patients of Dr. Trainor, to be scheduled for 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery.

Please talk to a member of your healthcare team if you have questions or do not understand any of the information in this handout.

Last reviewed: May 2021