

Discharge Instructions after Anesthesia for Adults

Today you received an anesthetic to help you relax and be comfortable for a procedure. Here are a few things you can do to help feel better after your procedure.

Leaving the hospital

Your nurse will go over these instructions on how to care for yourself. An adult should stay with you today. They can help assist with your care and keep you safe. For the first day at home:

- Do not drive or use heavy equipment.
- Do not make important decisions or sign legal documents.
- Do not drink alcohol.

Managing pain

Some pain is expected. Both medicine and non-medicine techniques can help reduce your discomfort. This can include heat, ice, relaxation, distraction or positioning. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist may give you other tips on managing pain.

You may be taking pain medicine at home. Consider these points:

- Pain medicine can upset your stomach. Taking them with food may help.
- Most oral pain medicines need at least 20 to 30 minutes to start to work.
- Constipation is a common side effect of narcotic (opioid) pain medicines. Drinking lots of fluids and eating high fiber foods can help reduce constipation. Talk to your doctor about laxatives you could take if needed.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medicine. Drinking alcohol and taking pain medicine can cause dizziness, slow breathing and even death.
- Do not drive or operate heavy equipment while using narcotic pain medicines. They can affect decision-making and make you react more slowly.
- As your pain control improves, consider reducing the dose of your pain medicine (taking 1 pill instead of 2 or spacing longer between doses).
- Some pain medicines (ex: Norco[®], Percocet[®]) contain acetaminophen, the active ingredient in Tylenol[®]. Ask your doctor or nurse before taking acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) if you are prescribed a pain medicine. Too much acetaminophen can cause liver failure and death.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about taking medicines such as ibuprofen (Motrin[®]) or celecoxib (Celebrex[®]). These may be helpful to your pain control but can be harmful in some situations.

Managing nausea

Nausea is a common side effect after surgery. Here are a few tips to help with nausea:

- Do not push yourself to eat. Your body will tell you when to eat and how much.
- Start with clear liquids and soup. These are easier to digest.
- Next try soft foods like applesauce, Jell-O™ or mashed potatoes.
- Slowly move to solid foods. Avoid fatty, rich or spicy foods.
- Smaller, frequent meals are easier to digest than 3 large meals a day.
- Take pain medicines with a small amount of food.

Activity

It is common to have muscle aches and feel tired after surgery. Resting helps your body to heal. Your doctor may have special instructions about your activity.