

****INCISIONAL CARE****

Your incision has been continually observed by the doctors and nurses who have been with you during your hospitalization. Now that you are going home, this is going to be your responsibility.

First, take a look at your incisions **BEFORE** you go home and take notice of how they are healing. When you are home, watch for continuation of the healing process.

If you notice the following, please call our office at 763-0510 immediately so that we may see you:

1. Increase in redness
2. Swelling, puffiness
3. Drainage
4. New open areas

It is normal for your incisions to be slightly red, sore, and itchy while they are healing.

****SHOWERING AND BATHING****

You may shower once you are home and feel you can tolerate standing for the period of time you are in the shower. It is recommended that the first few times you do shower, someone should be home with you to assist if needed.

You may use mild soap (avoid heavy deodorant soaps like Irish Spring and Lifebouy) and water gently on the incisions. Be sure the water is tepid. Extreme in water temperature (too hot or too cold) may irritate healing incisions. Please keep all incisions absolutely dry after washing.

Bathing and soaking in the tub of water is not recommended if you have leg incisions. Do not apply moist compresses unless specifically directed by your surgeon. This may irritate or cause an infection in the healing incisions. Do not use powders, lotions, ointments, salves, or balms on your incision.

****STAIRS****

There are no restrictions on using stairways once you are home. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Going up the stairs, lead with the non-incisional leg.
2. Going down the stairs, lead with the incisional leg.
3. Take a rest every 3-4 stairs until you feel completely comfortable.
4. DO NOT RUSH up and down the stairs.
5. Breathe normally, pause to take breaths if necessary.

****RETURNING TO NORMAL ACTIVITY****

Healing from surgery is a gradual process. Improvements will occur day to day, although some days may be better than others. This is part of the normal healing process. Expect to take _____ weeks to be fully recovered.

Each activity you engage in requires a certain amount of energy and places oxygen demands on your heart. If you work at a moderate pace and space activities evenly throughout the day, there is less demand for oxygen by the heart. This will allow you to accomplish more activities.

Some of the following guidelines will help you at home:

1. Do not sit in the same position for an extended period of time. Changing positions aid in circulation.
2. Relax between activities even if it is just 5-10 minutes.
3. Avoid lifting or carrying more than 8-10 pounds for the first _____ weeks. Avoid prolonged holding of an object. Avoid pushing and pulling against resistance such as shoveling, pushing a sweeper, lifting a jammed window, or opening a tight jar lid for the first _____ weeks. There are all types of isometric activities which puts excessive demands on the body as it is healing from the stress of surgery.
4. No walking hills or grades for the first _____ weeks.
5. Rest BEFORE you get tired.
6. Loose fitting comfortable clothes will allow you to move freely.
7. Consider where you are working
 - Too hot?
 - Too cold?
 - Proper lighting?
 - Are objects within easy reach?
8. Avoided competitive games which raise your heart rate very quickly for the first _____ weeks.
9. Be sure to ask for assistance with tasks that are too stressful or too fatiguing.
10. Gradually increase work periods and amount of activity for the first _____ weeks.

If you experience shortness of breath, dizziness, fatigue, excessive sweating, excessive chest pain, or pressure during an activity, you may be working too fast; or the task may be too strenuous for your heart. Stop what you are doing and rest.