

**GENERAL SURGERY: POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**  
**SAN FRANCISCO SURGICAL MEDICAL GROUP**  
**DR. \_\_\_\_\_**  
**PHONE: 415-668-0411, 415-923-3020**

**DIET**

- Begin with liquids and light food (Gelatin, soups, etc.). Progress to your normal diet if you experience no nausea. Avoid heavy, greasy foods.
- NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES FOR 24 HOURS

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

- Do not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours
- Do not make important decisions or sign legal documents for 24 hours
- On the following day you may do those **activities** that you feel comfortable performing, and within 3 to 4 days resume all normal activities unless instructed otherwise by your doctor. A rule of thumb is **“if it hurts, don’t do it!”** Activity that does not cause pain is okay.
- You may feel dizzy, lightheaded or sleepy for 12 to 24 hours after your operation. This is perfectly normal. After a general anesthetic it is normal to feel tired. A sore throat may also occur.
- If surgery was done on your arms or legs, keep that extremity elevated for 24-48 hours.

**DRESSING/ SHOWERING/ BATHING**

- You may remove the outer gauze dressing on the first after surgery and shower.
- Small pieces of tape covering your incisions should be left in place for 2 weeks or until they fall off. These are called steri-strips. These need to be left in place, as they support the wound.
- If your incisions are covered in plastic film, you may shower with this in place one day after surgery. Remove the film and underlying gauze in 3 days; **do not remove the white steri-strips**.
- Do not submerge incisions in water for 2 weeks post-operatively.

**PAIN / WHAT TO EXPECT**

- Mild pain relievers or medications prescribed by your doctor can usually relieve discomfort or pain. You may also be prescribed a narcotic (Vicodin, Percocet, Tylenol #3) and a NSAID (ibuprofen/Motrin). It is safe to take them together as prescribed. Avoid Tylenol/acetaminophen as your prescribed narcotic already contains this medication. **Taking more may be dangerous!** If you have only mild pain, and are not requiring narcotics, then it is safe to take Tylenol alone.
- An ice pack over the wound helps cut down on pain and swelling and will assist your postoperative recovery. Do not apply directly to skin (place a cloth between skin and ice pack). Do not leave on continuously.

**NOTIFY YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY, IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- Fever greater than 101° Fahrenheit
- Redness around the incision
- Intolerable pain, swelling or bleeding. A small amount of bleeding is normal. Before calling, first hold pressure with gauze over the incision for 20 minutes. It's okay to change the outer dressing if it is stained with blood. If bleeding persists, please call.
- Inability to tolerate liquids within 8 hours of the procedure or intractable nausea and vomiting
- Inability to urinate within 6 hours of returning home.

**FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT:**

- Make an appointment to see your doctor in \_\_\_\_\_ days. Call the doctor’s office to make this appointment if it has not already been arranged.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL OUR OFFICES AT 415-668-0411 OR 415-923-3020 DURING OUR OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY – FRIDAY 9 AM – 5 PM.

IF YOU REQUIRE MEDICAL ATTENTION AND ARE UNABLE TO CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR, PLEASE GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM AT CALIFORNIA PACIFIC MEDICAL CENTER AT BUCHANAN STREET AND SACRAMENTO STREET OR YOUR NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM.

These instructions have been discussed with the patient and/or the patient’s representative and copy of these instructions has been given to the patient.

Signature Patient/Representative \_\_\_\_\_