

Florida Heart and Lung Institute Lung Surgery Discharge Instructions

Diet: You may resume a regular healthy diet. It is important to drink plenty of fluids, unless otherwise instructed, to keep the mucous membranes thin and easy to cough out.

Activity: Increase activity level gradually, it can take as long as 4-6 weeks to fully return to your baseline

Walking is a good form of light exercise; go for a walk at least three times per day

It is ok to walk stairs

Check with your doctor before you start heavy lifting and full-intensity exercise

No heavy lifting (over 10 pounds) for at least 3 weeks from surgery

No swimming until wound is fully healed

No driving or operating motorized vehicles while on prescription pain medications

No driving for 3 weeks post surgery

Resume sexual activity when you feel ready

Deep breathing and coughing exercises help to fully expand your lungs and mobilize any secretions from your lungs that have been developed. These exercises are described below:

Perform at least 3 times/day for approximately 10 minutes for 2-3 weeks post op

1. Sit in an upright position leaning slightly forward with your feet flat on the floor or lying on your side with your feet towards your stomach
2. Breathe slowly and deeply through your nose and out through your mouth which helps loosen the secretions in your lungs. Repeat this a few times (3-5 times) and then take a deep breath in and cough several times as your breath out and repeat.
3. It will be important to pace yourself with this exercise and take your time to avoid getting tired or winded too quickly

Bathing: You can shower 24 hours after your chest tube has been removed

You may notice a suture where the chest tube was removed. It is ok to not have a bandage over that suture. Suture will be removed at your postoperative appointment.

Gently let soap and water run over your incision and pat dry. Do not scrub the incision/wound

Don't soak in a bath until your incision is healed and evaluated by your physician at follow-up

Wound Care: General Instructions

Remove your dressings 2 days after surgery

You may leave your incision open to air

Keep your incision clean and dry

No lotions, creams, ointments, or powders on incisions until they are well-healed

You have glue over the incision(s) that will fall off on its own; do not pick it off.

Abdominal staples/sutures, if present, will be removed 2 to 3 weeks after surgery during your follow-up clinic visit

If present, change dressing/bandage when soaked/soiled as needed

Observe wound daily, checking for signs and symptoms of infection including: increased redness, increased pain at incision, drainage from incision, increased swelling at incision site

Pain Control: Expect post-operative pain for 1-4 weeks after surgery

You have been provided with a prescription medication for pain. Please take as directed, and be aware of side effects such as drowsiness, constipation and mild stomach discomfort. Pain pills on an empty stomach can cause nausea, so eat a small amount of food, such as crackers, when taking these pills

Take over-the-counter stool softeners (Colace or Senna) with your prescribed pain medication

Acetaminophen (650mg every 6 hours) or Ibuprofen (600mg every 6 hours) may be used in conjunction with narcotics to relieve burn pain if you do not have an allergy to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications and if you do not have a history of gastrointestinal bleeding or ulcers

Bowel regimen for constipation:

People who undergo surgery are likely to develop post-operative constipation. Exposure to narcotics and changes in diet, fluid intake, and physical activity are known contributors to this constipation. We recommend routine stool softeners and laxatives after surgery for most patients. These medications are over-the-counter and do not require a prescription.

Colace is a stool softener. We recommend starting at 100mg orally twice per day as needed for soft stools and increase to a maximum of 200mg twice daily as needed

Senna is a laxative that works by keeping water in the intestine to help stool move along the intestinal tract. Take 1 tablet daily as needed for soft stool and increase to a maximum of 2 tablets twice daily as needed. Take Senna with two full glasses of water each time

Miralax, Docolax and Milk of Magnesia are other over-the-counter laxatives that may be used as needed for post-operative constipation

Drink 6-8 glasses of water per day

Consume 15-30g of fiber per day

Metamucil powder, 1-2 tablespoons 1-2 times/day OR

Benefiber powder, 2 tablespoons 4 times/day

Avoid straining

Call **352-333-5610** immediately if you have any of the following:

Pain that gets worse or is not relieved by medication

Warmth, redness, or swelling in the skin around the wound

Foul drainage from incision

Extensive bruising or discoloration

Wound that opens up or pulls apart

Fever above 101.5° F or shaking chills

Nausea or vomiting

Severe diarrhea or severe constipation

Dizziness or fainting

Chest pain, shortness of breath, or increased work of breathing

Inability to urinate for more than 6 hours

Cloudy or smelly urine