Discharge Instructions for Patients after Open Heart Surgery

Diet:  Low Salt _____  Low Fat _____  Diabetic _______________  Other __________

Lifting Restrictions:  Do not lift more than 10 pounds for the first 4 weeks after surgery, then do not lift more than 25 pounds for the next 8 weeks.

Activity:  Continue walking __________ times per day, for _______ minutes at a time.  If you become short of breath or tired with walking, stop and rest.

Driving:  No driving for _____ weeks.  You may be a passenger in the car; please wear your seat belt.

Work:  Your return to work will be discussed at the office visit with your surgeon.

Sexual Activity:  You may resume sexual activity when you feel ready.  Do not put any excessive pressure on your chest.

Other Instructions:
  •  Continue your breathing exercises throughout the day.
  •  Weigh yourself daily.  Keep a log.  If your weight increases more than 2 lbs. per day or more than 5 lbs. in a week, call the office.
  •  Call if you have any of the following:
    - Chest pain (angina); expect some incisional discomfort.
    - Shortness of breath that doesn’t go away with rest.
    - Fever greater than 101\(^0\) F or chills.
    - Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.
    - Increased pain, swelling, redness, or bruising in or around your wound.
    - Drainage from your wound, or if your wound opens.
  •  Help prevent leg swelling and clots by walking each hour and by keeping your legs elevated when sitting.
  •  Shower daily.  Wash your incision gently with warm water and mild soap.
  •  Do not put any creams, ointments, or lotions on your incisions.
  •  Use caution when reaching, bending, lifting, or getting up from sitting, or when getting in and out of bed.

Expected Symptoms After Surgery
  •  You will experience discomfort along the incision for 3 to 4 weeks.
  •  You may experience numbness along your chest or leg incision for 2 to 3 months.
  •  You will feel very fatigued for about 2 to 4 weeks.

Do not hesitate to call your surgeon’s office at 610-954-3990 with any questions you might have after you go home.