Discharge Information After Your Gastrointestinal (GI) Surgery

Here is information about what to expect before you leave the hospital. Your nurse and doctor will talk with you about the following:

- **Your bowels:** When you start to pass gas, this is a sign your bowels are working. The doctors and nurses will listen to your belly several times a day for bowel sounds and will ask if you have passed gas or had a bowel movement.

- **Your bladder:** Before you leave the hospital, you should be able to urinate on your own. Most patients will have a Foley catheter (urine tube) put in the bladder during surgery. After the Foley catheter is removed, you should be able to urinate on your own. Your nurse will also keep track of how often and how much you urinate. If you are not able to urinate on your own, you may need to go home with a Foley catheter in place.

- **Diet and nutrition:** It is important that you are able to eat and keep fluids down before you leave the hospital. Your doctor will slowly increase your diet after surgery and will make sure you are able to drink enough fluids to stay hydrated. You may also need to drink a nutrition supplement like Boost or Ensure.

- Eating healthy meals after surgery helps with wound healing. Eat foods that are high in protein such as, meat, fish, cheese, milk, soybean products and eggs. A dietitian is available to help you plan meals and make healthy food choices.

- **Oxygen levels:** It is common to need oxygen for a short period of time after surgery. Your doctors and nurses will check your oxygen levels often during your hospital stay. You will also be asked to use an incentive spirometer device after surgery. This helps you take deep breaths to keep your lungs clear. It is important to use your incentive spirometer at home to help you recover.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

Day of Discharge

- Most patients will be discharged from the hospital early in the day.
- You will be given **new prescriptions** for any new medicine your doctor has ordered on the day of discharge. Your nurse will go over these new medicines before you leave and will answer any of your questions.
- You may need a home health care nurse or to go to a skilled nursing facility. A social worker or Patient Care Resource Manager (PCRM) will work with you and your family to help arrange any needed care after discharge.
- **After Visit Summary and Education** - Before you leave the hospital, a member of your health care team will go over your discharge instructions, also known as the After Visit Summary (AVS), with you. These instructions include all of your follow-up appointments, medicines, important care information and other instructions.

**Doctor:**
________________________________________________________

**Phone Number:**
________________________________________________________

**Follow-up Appointment**

Your follow-up appointment will be in your AVS and is most often 2 weeks after discharge. If you go home with a surgical drain in place, it is important to bring your drain log with you to your follow-up appointment.