

Heller Myotomy and Peroral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM)

Discharge Instructions

You just had surgery to treat achalasia where an incision was made in the valve between your esophagus and stomach to help food go down easier. Follow these care guidelines during your recovery. **If you have any questions or concerns, please call 614-293-3230.** If you need to have paperwork completed to apply for disability, the office fax is 614-293-4030.

After surgery

You should expect to be in the hospital at least 1 night after your surgery. The staff will review your care instructions with you. Please ask if you have any questions, or if there is any thing that you do not understand.

Activity

- Walk as often as you are able to reduce the risk of blood clots or pneumonia, and to improve healing.
- Talk to your doctor about when it is okay for you to return to work.
- Do not drive if you are taking prescription pain medicine, often 1 to 2 weeks after surgery.
- Avoid lifting, pushing or pulling anything that weighs more than 10 pounds for 2 weeks after surgery. A gallon of milk weighs about 8 pounds.

Coughing and deep breathing

- Use your incentive spirometer at home for at least 2 weeks or until your cough is very dry.

- Call your doctor if you have more shortness of breath or blood in your mucus when coughing as these can be signs of pneumonia.

If you have incisions

- Keep your incisions dry for 24 hours.
- Your incisions can be left open to the air after 24 hours. If you have drainage, you can use a band-aid or gauze dressing.
- You can shower but avoid tub baths, hot tubs and swimming until your incisions are healed, often after 2 weeks.
- Do not remove the tapes, called steri strips, that hold your incisions closed. The strips should come loose and fall off on their own in about 7 to 10 days. If they are still in place after 10 days, you can remove them.
- Wash your incisions gently with soap and water. Rinse well with clean water and pat them dry with a clean towel.
- Do not use oils, powders or lotions on your incisions until they are healed.
- Check your incisions each day for any signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, increased pain or increased drainage.



Medicines

- **Take crushed or liquid medicines for 2 weeks after surgery.**
- **Take the pill crusher home with you from the hospital.**
- If you have pills, check with your pharmacist or primary care doctor to be sure you can crush them to add them to liquids to ease swallowing.
- Take your pain medicine as ordered as you need to keep your pain under control.
- If you are to take an antibiotic, finish all of the medicine, even if you do not feel you have an infection.
- Take your medicines as ordered.

Nutrition

You will be on a full liquid diet for 2 weeks after surgery. You will then advance to a soft diet for a few days before starting your regular diet. Please read the handout, “Diet after Heller Myotomy and Peroral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM)” for more information.

- You will be on a liquid diet at first.
- Sit up when eating and drinking, and sit up for 20 to 30 minutes after eating.
- Eat slowly and chew your food well.
- Eat smaller meals every couple hours instead of 3 larger meals.
- Avoid carbonated drinks and limit foods that may cause more abdominal gas, such as high fat foods, beans and vegetables, like broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower.

Follow up

- It is important to go to your follow up appointment after surgery.
- Refer to your **After Visit Summary** for your appointment date and time.

When to call the doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Problems drinking or eating
- Signs of infection at your incision site, such as redness, tenderness, more pain or more drainage
- A fever of 100.4 degrees F (38 degrees C) or higher
- Reflux symptoms come back or continue
- Abdominal pain or swelling, especially after coughing
- Tenderness in abdomen or belly feels hard
- Bowel movements are black or bloody
- Pain or tenderness in your legs
- Chest pain or any problems breathing

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, go to patienteducation.osumc.edu or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.