

Home Care after Lung Volume Reduction Surgery

You will be given detailed instructions about your care before your discharge from the hospital. Here is some general information to help you plan for your care after surgery.

Home care

- Have someone stay with you for the first 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. Some patients may need a short stay in a rehabilitation facility or nursing visits at home after their hospital stay.
- Use your oxygen as you were during your hospital stay. Your oxygen needs will be checked when you start back to pulmonary rehabilitation after surgery. Your oxygen may be changed as your lung function improves.
- Do your breathing exercises using the incentive spirometer every 1 to 2 hours when you are awake for 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.
- Cover your incisions with plastic wrap when you shower as long as you have the stitches or staples in place. Avoid having the water directly hit your wounds. Gently pat dry with a clean towel.

Medicines

- Take your pain medicine as needed to control your pain. You will be given a prescription for pain medicine before you leave the hospital. It is best to get by with as little pain medicine as possible, so you are able to be active, walk and do your breathing exercises.
- Take a **stool softener** if you have constipation as a side effect of the pain medicine.
- Take all of your medicines as ordered when you were discharged from the hospital.

Activity

- Walk several times each day. Increase the amount of time and the distance you walk each day.
- Resume outpatient pulmonary rehab 1 to 2 weeks after leaving the hospital. Someone from outpatient pulmonary rehab will call to schedule your first session.



For 4 to 6 weeks after surgery

- You are not to lift or pull more than 10 pounds. A gallon of milk weighs about 8 pounds.
- You are not allowed to drive.
- You may not be able to return to work. This will depend on your recovery and the type of work you do.

After lung surgery, you may expect:

- A lack of energy or tiredness that may last 4 weeks or longer.
- A decrease in appetite that may last 2 to 4 weeks.
- Pain that decreases over time.
- Less shortness of breath over time.
- Numbness and tingling around the incision. This may take 6 to 12 months to improve.
- Weakness in your arms that can last up to 4 weeks. Physical therapy may be ordered if you have this problem.

Call your doctor or nurse if you have:

- Sudden increased shortness of breath or chest tightness that is more than your usual, with or without activity.
- Any sign of infection at your incision and chest tube sites, such as redness, swelling, bleeding or colored discharge.
- A fever greater than 100.5 degrees F or 38 degrees C.
- Constipation that lasts more than a day or two or that is unusual for you.
- Trouble staying awake or you feel very drowsy.
- Any change in your condition that concerns you.

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.