

Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery Post-operative Discharge Teaching

Patient Information Sheet

For Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery (VATS):

- Please arrange to have a family member stay with you for 1-2 days

Diet

- Resume a regular diet

Dressings

- Steri-strips (white tapes) over small incisions will peel off in 7-10 days
- Bandage over the chest tube site may be removed in 3 days after chest tube removal and left open to air. Small amount of clear, yellow drainage is normal

Activity

- No heavy lifting (greater than 10 lbs), pushing, pulling or twisting for 2 weeks
- Continue with deep breathing and coughing exercises and incentive spirometer for 2 weeks
- Continue with walking and exercises at intervals throughout the day
- No driving for 1 week and while taking narcotics

Pain Medication

- You will be given a prescription for pain medication
- It is better to take small dose of medication more often, according to your prescription to keep pain under control
- Constipation is common when taking narcotics. Take a stool softener while on narcotics or a mild laxative if necessary.

Bathing

- You may shower after the dressing is removed from where the chest tube was located
- Pat incisions dry, no creams or lotions



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Return to work

- 2-3 weeks depending on work, consult physician

Follow-up

- Follow up with family doctor in 1 week to check incision, check breathing and assess pain medications
- Surgical follow-up is pre-booked for scheduled surgery, see your surgical package in white envelope



Call your Family Doctor if you are experiencing any:

- Signs of infection (Fever – Temp greater than 38.5°C, chills, redness around surgical site, drainage that appears like pus or a foul smell from your surgical incision)
- New swelling and pain to lower legs
- Increased pain that is not relieved by pain medication



Go to the closest Emergency if you experience any:

- Bleeding
- Sudden shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chest pain

