

# General Instructions Following **Carotid Endarterectomy**

**\*If you have increasing redness around the incision sites, thick drainage, or fever above 101°F  
call the office as soon as possible (314-434-1211) to speak with our clinical staff.**

## WHAT TO EXPECT

- Immediately following surgery you will be placed in the Intensive Care Unit (*CVICU – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the hospital*) for at least 6 hours. Once appropriate you will be moved to the surgical floor (8700) before being released home – usually the day after your surgery.
- It is normal to experience numbness around your incision site, moderate swelling, and/or a hoarse voice. These symptoms may remain for days to months after your surgery.
  - Any swelling you may develop should NOT affect your swallowing. If it does please call our office immediately if this were to occur.
- You *may* be sore for 3-4 days following your procedure. Each day will get better, thereafter (*i.e. improvement starting on day 5*).
- You may or may not turn black and blue (*bruise*) around your incision sites and surrounding tissue. It is normal for this bruising to travel down your chest as it resolves, due to gravity. You may develop mild to moderate swelling around the incision site.
- You will have a J-P drain (*Jackson Pratt*) placed during surgery. It will be removed in the hospital before you are discharged home

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Your surgeon will let you know when you may shower (usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> post op day – **you will need to keep your drain site covered in the shower until it scabs over**). Do not leave wet dressings against your skin. Change the dressing immediately after showering.

## MEDICATIONS

- You may be sent home with prescription pain medicine. Try to first control pain with over the counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen (*Advil*), following package instructions. Use the narcotic pain prescription only if the Tylenol or Ibuprofen is not effective.
  - You **should not** drive while on pain medicine.
  - All narcotics cause severe constipation, as well as possible nausea and vomiting.
- If you take the prescription pain medicine, it is a good idea to take a stool softener to counteract constipation. You can also take Milk of Magnesia, MOM. All are over the counter.

- If this is not effective in producing a bowel movement in **2 days**, please call our office for more instructions.

#### *RESTRICTIONS*

- You should not do any strenuous exercise for 6-8 weeks unless directed otherwise.
- You may walk as much as you like.
- It is also important **NOT to drive for at least a week after you surgery**, since it will be difficult to move you head from side to side (*you will be sore*).
- You may not drive if you are taking prescription pain medication.

#### *FOLLOW UP*

- Call the office for a **“post-op”** visit 1-2 weeks after your surgery for a follow up visit with your surgeon.
- At your post-op visit you will make an appointment with our Ultrasound Lab in 6 months to 1 year for follow up.
- If you have increasing redness around the incision, drainage, or fever above 101°F call the office.
  - Your incision site(s) will be red and *may* drain.
    - Do **NOT** soak healing incision site(s) – i.e. a bath, hot tub, swimming pool
    - Clear to light pink/red drainage is normal a few days after surgery
      - You may apply loose dressings to stop any drainage from soiling clothing.

**The office is open for phone calls from 8am - 5 pm Monday-Thursday, Friday 8am -4 pm. For after hours, call the Medical Exchange @ 314-364-5262 to speak to the surgeon on call.**

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