

# Discharge Instructions

## Endovascular Repair of Aortic Aneurysm (EVAR)

### Activity

- ◆ Slowly increase activity. Walk short distances on flat surfaces 3-4 times per day for the first week after the procedure. If this is well-tolerated, you may increase the distance. Avoid exercising in extreme temperatures.
- ◆ When you are not walking, elevate your legs above the level of your heart. This will help reduce the swelling in your legs.
- ◆ Limit stair climbing to 2 times a day for the first 2-3 days after the procedure.
- ◆ Do **NOT** perform any strenuous activity such as yard work, sports, running, pushing or pulling type activities until you return for your follow-up visit. No lifting over 5 lbs (a half gallon of milk) for 2 weeks.
- ◆ No driving for 1 week after the procedure. You may ride in a car. Before resuming driving, make sure you can firmly extend your foot to the brake without pain. For some people this may be longer than 1 week.
- ◆ Sexual intercourse should be avoided for 2 weeks, avoid positions that will cause strain in the incisional area for 2-3 weeks.
- ◆ If you smoke, please quit. Smoking increases your chances of developing heart disease, carotid artery disease, lung cancer, and peripheral artery disease. It can also delay wound healing.

### Personal Hygiene/Shower

- ◆ You may shower on the day after your procedure. Do NOT sit down in water for a tub bath, use a whirlpool, hot tub or swimming pool for 4 weeks, or until the incision is completely healed.
- ◆ Gently wash the incisions with soap and water when you are in the shower. Pat dry with a clean towel. Do NOT scrub the incision. Make sure the incisions are kept clean and dry. Do NOT apply lotions, ointments or creams to the incision.

### Diet

- ◆ You may resume your normal diet when you return home unless otherwise directed.
- ◆ If you have diabetes, keeping your glucose level in good control with help with wound healing.
- ◆ It will be important for you to get an adequate amount of protein and calories for the next 6-8 weeks to promote healing of your incisions, unless you have a dietary restriction.
- ◆ For most people a low saturated fat and low cholesterol diet which is high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains is a good healthy diet, unless a specific diet plan has been otherwise provided for you to follow.

### Incision

- ◆ It is normal for there to be some redness, bruising, or swelling for the first week after the procedure. There will be a raised ridge along the incision line for several weeks. This is normal.
- ◆ Dermabond is adhesive glue that is used to close the incision. There are sutures under the skin. These will dissolve over time. The glue will appear shiny at first and then become sticky, darken and begin to peel away. Do **NOT** scrub the incision, this glue will dissolve and come off in 1-2 weeks after the procedure on its own.
- ◆ If you have staples or sutures they will be removed at your first office visit following your surgery.

### Medications

**You have been prescribed**



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- ☐ Aspirin 81 mg daily
- ☐ Plavix 75 mg daily
- ☐ Coumadin
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**It is VERY important that you take these medications as directed. They help keep the graft open.**

- ◆ For mild incisional discomfort you may take an over-the-counter pain medications such as Acetaminophen (Tylenol). Take it as directed on the package. Do **NOT** take Tylenol along with prescription pain medication.
- ◆ You will be given a prescription for pain medication. Take it as directed. Pain medication causes drowsiness and you should not drive while taking prescription pain medication.
- ◆ A side effect of prescription pain medication is constipation. If this occurs you may take Docusate Sodium (Colace), a stool softener, once or twice a day while on pain medication. If constipation persists you may take an over the counter laxative such a Dulcolax tablets. Take as directed on the packaging. If you do not have relief of constipation after taking a laxative, contact your nurse practitioner or physician assistant for further instructions.
- ◆ Pain medications can also cause nausea if taken on an empty stomach. Take the medication with a meal or small snack to avoid this side effect.

### **Call Your Surgeon for Any of These Symptoms @ (478) 743-9762**

- ◆ Leg swelling that does not improve with frequent elevation above the level of the heart.
- ◆ **(Reminder: Lower leg swelling is common after this procedure. If this happens elevate your legs when you are reclining above the level of your heart. The swelling may last for several weeks).**
- ◆ There is bleeding at the catheter insertion site or incision that does not stop when
- ◆ pressure is applied.
- ◆ A painful swelling occurs over a catheter insertion site.
- ◆ The incision has increasing pain, redness, swelling or draining pus.
- ◆ Leaking of fluid from the incision.
- ◆ Your leg becomes cold, painful or numb.
- ◆ You have chest pain or shortness of breath.
- ◆ You have chills or a fever over 101 degrees F.

### **Returning to Work**

- ◆ All patients with vascular disease should take important steps to prevent worsening of their condition or development of new disease. It is very important that if you smoke to quit. Good medical management of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes, along with maintaining a normal body weight is encouraged to all of our patients. This is one of the reasons why routine follow-up with your primary care physician is very important to your continued health and well-being.

### **Follow-up appointment**

- ◆ A follow-up appointment will be made for you before you leave the hospital with your surgeon. It will be 2-3 weeks from your procedure date. Make every effort to make this appointment. We will check your incisions for healing, and make important follow-up imaging (CT scan) appointments. It is **VERY** important that these follow-up pictures are scheduled and kept to make sure your new graft is functioning properly.

### **Returning to Work**

- ◆ This is generally discussed at the first post-operative visit after your procedure. If you have a job that does not require physical labor you may be able to return to work in 2-3 weeks as long as you are not sitting for long periods and can move around frequently. If your job requires physical labor you will be off from work at least 4 weeks.