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Post-Op Instructions Following Thoracotomy (Incision between the Ribs) Surgery

Activity

For six (6) weeks following surgery, you are to do no heavy lifting over twenty (20) pounds. Walking multiple times each day is encouraged. This includes stair climbing. Driving is permissible. For the first two (2) weeks that you are home, use your incentive spirometer to do breathing exercises multiple times each day just like you did in the hospital.

Wound Care

Five (5) days after your chest tubes are taken out, remove your chest tube site dressing and begin your daily shower routine. Your incision can be showered but do not submerge in water until the skin staples are removed two (2) to three (3) weeks after surgery. If you have fluid seepage from your chest tube site, cover it with dry gauze to keep your clothes clean.

Pain Medications

A thoracotomy incision is a very painful incision, so you will be given a prescription for pain pills at the time of the hospital discharge. To help with pain control you can for the first seven to ten days you are at home, take Advil 400mg three times a day with food. Do not take Advil if you have a history of stomach ulcers, have an allergy to ibuprofen, or are taking blood thinning medications.

If you have any issues or questions, please call your physician at one of the phone numbers below.

Patient Responsibility

I have read and fully understand the above post-operative instructions for my thoracotomy surgery.

Patient's Name (Please Print): _____

Patient's Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____

Thank you for choosing Surgical Associates of West Florida to provide your surgical care.

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