

NEUROSURGICAL ASSOCIATES, L.L.C

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VAGAL NERVE STIMULATION (VNS) SURGERY

Discharge Instructions

Please follow instructions carefully to aid a healthy recovery.

Common Symptoms

- Mild swelling and bruising is common at the surgical sites and will gradually resolve over the next few weeks.
- You may also have some tenderness and pain at the surgical sites. This too will gradually decrease over the next few weeks.
- You may notice a sore throat and minor swallowing difficulties. This is usually temporary and resolves within a few weeks after surgery. If you experience inability to swallow liquids, or inability to speak, please notify us immediately.

Wound Care

- The incisions are closed with dissolvable sutures and **skin glue** which will **gradually peel off** by itself in approximately **7-10 days**.
- Keep incisions dry for 48 hours.
- You may shower (do not bathe) 48 hours after surgery. Do not scrub the incision areas. Pat dry.
- Keep incision clean and open to air.
- Limit sun exposure on incision as it has a higher tendency to burn and remain red.
- **DO NOT** soak in bath, swim in pools, or use hot tubs or sauna for 2 weeks.

Medications/Discomfort/Treatment

- You will be given a prescription for a narcotic for more severe pain. This medication can cause confusion, constipation, nausea or a rash. If any of these symptoms occur, stop taking the medication. Only take as needed and gradually taper off as tolerated.
- For mild to moderate pain, you may take over-the-counter pain medication (i.e. Tylenol or Ibuprofen).
- If you asked to stop blood thinners such as aspirin or Plavix, you may restart these 2 days after surgery.
- Continue to take all of your medications for your movement disorder the same way as you did before the surgery. It can take up to 48 hours to feel back to your normal pre-operative state.
- **DO NOT** drive while taking narcotic pain medication.
- You will be given a prescription for a medication that helps prevent constipation. It is important to take this while taking the narcotic pain medication as constipation is a common side effect of narcotics. Please make sure you are drinking plenty of water and eating plenty of high fiber foods.
- You will also be given a prescription for an anti-nausea medication if needed.
- You may use ice packs to provide relief of swelling and pain at incision site. 20 minutes on/ 20 minutes off.

Activity

- **DO NOT** lift anything greater than 10 pounds for 2 weeks.
- No vigorous physical activity for 3 weeks after surgery.
- It is important to get daily exercise and walking is a great way to do this. Gradually increase your activity starting with short walks and increasing to 30 minutes a day/1-2 times per day.

Follow- Up/Programming

Your VNS system is brand new, and has not been turned on yet. The stimulator is tested during surgery. However, it will be turned on and programmed at your post-operative visit with your neurologist.

CALL US IMMEDIATELY

- If you see redness beyond the staple edges, swelling, or drainage from your incision or you develop a fever over 101.5.
- Leg pain and swelling are possible signs of a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and should be reported to us immediately. Also if there is any acute severe chest pain or shortness of breath, immediate evaluation is essential. To avoid a DVT, walk around at least several times throughout the day. In bed, exercise your legs frequently by flapping your ankles and doing bicycling exercises.
- If you develop a high fever, shaking chills, cough with phlegm (a slimy substance), which doesn't improve or worsens, develop shortness of breath with normal daily activities, have chest pain when you breathe or cough, or feel suddenly worse after a cold or flu you may have pneumonia. Symptoms may vary from mild to severe. Many factors affect how serious pneumonia is, including the type of germ causing the infection to your age and overall health. If you experience any of the above signs or symptoms it is very important to call us immediately. To help reduce your chance of getting pneumonia, it is important to get up and walk around several times a day. Taking deep breaths and coughing 10 times an hour while you are awake can reduce your risk of getting pneumonia.
- Painful urination, increased frequency, urgency, strong or foul smelling urine, or you notice your urine is cloudy, dark or bloody. These are all signs and symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI). This is not life threatening emergency but is very uncomfortable and should be treated with an antibiotic. Please call our office.