(GSE) Pancreatectomy (Removal of part or all the pancreas):

Patient Discharge Instructions

**What should I expect after surgery?**
- Your recovery depends on your type of procedure, why you had surgery and your previous activity level and health status.
- Most people need about 4-8 weeks or more after surgery before feeling back to normal. It is not unusual to experience a decrease in your appetite, tiredness, poor sleep, and a depressed mood during this timeframe. If your symptoms persist or worsen contact the surgery clinic or your doctor.

**How will I manage my pain at home?**
- You will best achieve pain control if you take your pain medication at regularly prescribed intervals (usually every 4-6 hours) to prevent pain build up and taper down as you recover.
- Strong pain medication or narcotics (like Vicodin, Oxycodone, Darvocet) may be prescribed.
- **DO NOT DRIVE OR DRINK ALCOHOL** while taking narcotics.
- Narcotic medication causes **constipation**. Stool Softeners (Colace or Ducusate) and fiber (fruits, brans, vegetables, Metamucil) and extra fluid intake helps. An over-the-counter stimulant laxative (Milk of Magnesia, Senekot) may be needed as well.
- NSAIDS like ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) taken every 6 hours as needed for pain may be effective in managing it in addition to the narcotics.
- To **prevent Tylenol overdose**, do not take a Tylenol doses at the same time as a combination narcotic dose that contains Tylenol, like Vicodin and Darvocet. However, You may take them 4-6 hours apart.

**Can I resume my previous medications?**
- Yes, unless directed not to by your doctor.
- Before discharge, be sure to review your previous medications with your doctor or inpatient medical team.

**How will I care for my incision?**
- Your incision or wound may be sensitive, so wearing loose clothing may feel more comfortable.
- You can gently wash your incision with soap and water using a clean towel after a shower then pat dry daily.
- You may shower but NO BATHS OR SOAKING INCISION UNDERWATER (like hot tubs or swimming pool).
- **DO NOT APPLY ointments or powders** on your incision or wound unless directed by your doctor.
- **Do not Smoke**. Smoking is bad for wound healing.
- If you have paper tape (called “steri strips”) on your incision, leave them in place until they begin to fall off naturally. If they become discolored or messy, you may remove those 10-14 days after application.
- If you have staples on your incision, leave them in place. They will be removed by your home care nurse or in the clinic on a follow up visit. They are usually removed 7-14 days after surgery.

**How do I care for an open wound (if you have one)?**
- If you have an open wound, you and your family will be taught to gently pack the wound with moistened gauze using either Normal Saline or Chloropactin solution 2-3 times a day. A home care nurse may visit you to assist with your wound care instructions and bring your dressing supplies (this varies depending on your health care insurance). You will be given a prescription for the solution to be obtained at the pharmacy and possibly for the dressing supplies.

**How do I care for my drain (if you have one)?**
- If you have a drain, the nursing staff will instruct you and your family on care for the drain site, emptying the bulb or flushing as directed by your doctor. You will be asked to bring in your record of the amount of drainage to your next follow-up visit.
What are my activity restrictions?

- **Walk as much as possible.** Gradually increase the length of time and the distance that you walk. You may return to your normal, non-stressful activities.
- You may climb stairs using the hand rail.
- Daily rest periods are encouraged but do not sit for long periods of time.
- **Do Not Drive** until you are seen by your doctor on your follow-up clinic visit. Usually, you may resume driving 2-3 weeks after discharge or once you are no longer in pain or taking narcotics and your activity level is back to normal.
- **Do Not lift, pull or push anything greater than 10 pounds** (10 pounds = about a gallon of milk) for 4-6 weeks or as directed by your doctor.
- **Avoid** activities that would make you tense or strain your abdominal muscles for 4-6 weeks or as directed by your physician. These activities include twisting, bending, vacuuming, or lawn mowing.
- **No** sexual activity until discussing it with your doctor at your follow-up clinic visits. Usually sexual activity can be resumed 3 weeks following discharge.

Are there any diet restrictions?

- If you have a **special part of the pancreas removed** you may have to eat a diabetic diet or take pancreatic enzymes with your food. Your doctor or dietician will teach you.
- You will find your appetite decreased at first, but it will improve as you feel better. You may be easier to eat smaller frequent meals.
- Some people have difficulty digesting fatty foods which may cause diarrhea and abdominal cramping that usually resolves 4-6 weeks after surgery.
- Protein and vitamins are an important part of wound healing so you may drink protein supplements like Ensure, Boost or Carnation instant breakfasts or if you are a diabetic, Glycercna.
- You may find taking an over-the-counter multi-vitamin may improve wound healing.

Will I need pancreatic enzymes?

- Pancreatic enzymes (like Ultrase, Pancrelipase, Viokase), are enzymes that help you digest your food. Those may be need if a special part of your pancreas is removed. Your doctor will direct you on their use if needed.
- If you need pancreatic enzymes, you will need to take them with meals and snacks.
- If you experience diarrhea, contact your doctor. You may need dose adjustments.

Will I need take insulin injections (shots)?

- If you have a **special part of your pancreas removed**, you may have “diabetes” that requires insulin injections that will could last either temporarily for weeks, to month or permanently.
- Insulin is medication that regulates glucose (sugar) levels in the blood. The nursing staff and doctors will teach how to monitor your blood glucose level with a glucometer and *insulin shots* several times a day.
- Your doctors, dietician and nurses will teach you about “diabetes” and usually recommend outpatient diabetic education classes. Locally, call Briarwood Diabetic Center for classes at 734-998-2475.

**If you had your spleen removed with your pancreas, remember the following:**

- You will need to get pneumococcal, meningococcal, and Haemophilus B conjugate vaccines and maintain your pneumococcal booster every 5 years as directed by your doctor. **Contact your doctor about a yearly influenza vaccine.**
- Call your doctor if you develop a fever or infection symptoms so that you receive the proper antibiotics.

**FOLLOW UP VISIT:** You will be scheduled for a return visit in the surgery clinic in 1-3 weeks. You will be mailed the appointment time.

When do I call for advice:

- If your temperature >101°, or chills.
- If you have increased pain or cramps.
- If you become nauseated, vomit, or develop constipation or loose stool; or are unable to eat.
- If your incision/wound/ drain site becomes reddened, swollen or has a change in drainage (especially foul creamy drainage); or your incision starts to open.
- If your drain discharge stops or you have a great change in the amount of drainage.

You may call the Clinical Nurse at 734-936-5818 Monday-Friday 8am-4pm. On weekends, holidays, or evenings call 734-936-6267 (hospital paging operator) and ask for the GSE resident on-call

**Resource Information:**

- University of Michigan Diabetic Website: [www.med.umich.edu/intmed/endocrinology/patients/diab_learn.htm](http://www.med.umich.edu/intmed/endocrinology/patients/diab_learn.htm)
- University of Michigan Endocrine Surgery Department Website: [www.um-endocrine-surgery.org/](http://www.um-endocrine-surgery.org/)