



University of Michigan
Hospitals and Health Centers

Insur:

Birthdate:

Name:

CPI#:

Visit#:

(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, Glycerna.
- You may find taking an over-the-counter multi-vitamin may improve wound healing.

Will I need pancreatic enzymes?

- *Pancreatic enzymes* (like Ultras, 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:

- Information on MEN (Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia) Syndrome
www.niddk.nih.gov/health/endo/pubs/fmen1/fmen1.htm
- University of Michigan Diabetic Website:
www.med.umich.edu/intmed/endocrinology/patients/diab_learn.htm
- University of Michigan Endocrine Surgery Department Website:
www.um-endocrine-surgery.org/