



University of Michigan  
Hospitals and Health Centers

Insur:

Birthdate:

Name:

CPI#:

Visit#:

## (GSE )Laparoscopic Adrenalectomy / Open Adrenalectomy (Removal of the adrenal gland):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.
- Most people need about 3-6 weeks or more after surgery before returning 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 worsen, contact the clinic.



### How will I manage my pain at home?

- You may take NSAIDS like ibuprofen (*Motrin, Advil*), naproxen (*Naprosyn, Aleve*) or acetaminophen (*Tylenol*) every 6 hours as needed for pain in addition to the narcotics. You will best achieve pain control if you take your pain medication at regularly prescribed intervals (usually every 6-8 hours) to prevent pain build up for the first 3-5 days.
- Strong pain medication or narcotics (like *Vicodin, Oxycodone, and Darvocet*) may be required to manage your pain in addition to the NSAIDS. This medication will be tapered off over the next couple of weeks as you recover.
- **DO NOT DRIVE OR DRINK ALCOHOL** while taking narcotic medication.
- Narcotic medication also causes **constipation**. Stool softeners (*Colace or Docusate*) and fiber (fruits, bran, vegetables) and extra fluid intake helps. A stimulant laxative (*Milk of Magnesia, Senekot*) may be needed as well.
- 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.
- If you had **laparoscopy procedure**, you may experience shoulder pain intermittently that resolves quickly. It may last for 2-3 weeks after surgery.

### How will I care for my incision?

- Your incision or wound may be sensitive, so wearing loose clothing may feel more comfortable. Avoid wearing tight restrictive clothing.
- *You can gently wash your incision* with soap and water using a clean towel after a shower then pat dry.
- You may shower but **NO BATHS OR SOAKING INCISIONS UNDERWATER** (like in hot tubs or swimming in a pool).
- **DO NOT APPLY ointments or powders** on your incisions or wound unless directed by your doctor.
- **Avoid** smoking to promote wound healing.
- If you had a **laparoscopy procedure**, you may remove your *plastic dressing* 2-3 day after surgery. Under the plastic dressing, you may have *paper tape (called "steri strips")*; leave them in place until they begin to fall off naturally. If they become discolored or messy, you may remove those 7-10 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.

### Are there any diet restrictions?

- No, always eat a well balanced diet, unless directed by your physician or dietician.
- You will find your appetite decreased at first, but it will improve as you recover. You may find eating smaller frequent meals will maintain your nutrition status.



### 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.**

### Will I receive steroid replacement?

• If you have had both adrenal glands removed, or if your remaining adrenal gland is not expected to function properly, you may receive steroids (*hydrocortisone and florinef*) to replace those formerly made by your adrenal gland. It is **mandatory** that you **never stop** taking these because the *medication may be essential for life depending* on your procedure. **You need to contact your doctor before changing or omitting a dose.**

• **You will need to purchase a medic alert bracelet stating “I have had an adrenalectomy, in case of emergency, hydrocortisone may be life saving”.**

You can enroll in **Medic Alert** by phone:

**1-800-432-5378**

or you can check the Medic Alert web page for ordering information.:

<http://www.medicalert.org/home/Homegradient.aspx>

*Inform all health care providers of your operation, especially in case of injury, surgery or dental care.*

- Carry extra doses of hydrocortisone with you for emergency use.
- If you are **taking steroid replacements**, limit your sodium (salt) intake which could lead to water retention. **However, if you exert yourself or spend time in hot temperatures you may lose too much salt.** So drink extra non-sugar liquids like water or tea and eat salty foods like chips, nuts, pretzels...



### 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.
- **Do Not Drive** until you are no longer taking narcotics and your activity level is back to normal.
- If you had an **open procedure, 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 physician.
- If you had an **open procedure, avoid activities** that would make you *tense or strain your abdominal muscles for 4-6 weeks* or as directed by your physician. These activities may include twisting or vacuuming.
- If you had a **laparoscopic procedure**, you may resume all your activities without restrictions within 1-2 weeks (as long as you are not taking narcotics).

### 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. In addition, the clinical coordinator will call you 1-3 business days after your discharge to see how you are doing and answer questions.

**If blood tests have been requested at the time of your return visit, please remember to go to Taubman Center 2<sup>nd</sup> floor blood station (near the surgery clinic) with your lab test requisitions at least one hour before your appointment.**



### When do I call for advice?:

- If your temperature  $>101^{\circ}$ , or chills.
- If you have increased pain or discomfort.
- If you become nauseated, vomit, or develop constipation or loose stool.
- If your incision/ wound becomes reddened, swollen or develops drainage (especially foul creamy drainage); or your incision starts to open.
- If you are discharged with a drain and the site becomes reddened, swollen, or the drainage stops or you have a great change in the amount of drainage.
- If you are unable to eat or drink.
- If you experience extreme fatigue, weakness, weight loss, dizziness, salt craving, muscle cramps, mood swings.

**You may call the Clinical Coordinator**

**at 734-936-5818**

**Monday-Friday**

**during business hours 8am to 4pm.**

**On weekends, holidays, or evenings**

**call 734-936-6267**

**(hospital paging operator)**

**and ask for the GSE resident on-call.**

### Resource Information:

- Website: national adrenal diseases foundation at [www.medhelp.org/nadf](http://www.medhelp.org/nadf).
- University of Michigan Endocrine Surgery Website: [www.um-endocrine-surgery.org/](http://www.um-endocrine-surgery.org/)