

# GENERAL AND SURGICAL ONCOLOGY SPECIALISTS OF CENTRAL PA



## PATIENT EDUCATION

### **After Outpatient Surgery**

Following your procedure, you will be brought to the recovery unit; this is a monitored care area, and therefore families and friends generally are not allowed. Dr. Conter will speak with you and/or your family or friends after your procedure.

The time you spend in the recovery unit will vary depending upon the type of procedure performed, the type of anesthesia that was given and your individual needs. Most patients are discharged within one-to-three hours after their procedure. If necessary we will arrange for you to have an extended stay, in another area of the hospital, to monitor your recovery.

Once you are stable, you will be transferred to another part of the recovery unit so you can rest and be taken care of until it is time for your discharge. Here the postoperative nurse will invite your family and/or friends to stay with you. You will be offered something to drink and a light snack.

The nurse will review Dr. Conter's post-operative home care instructions with you and your responsible adult caregiver, as well as explain any special instructions provided regarding diet, rest and medications. In general, your post operative follow-up appointment will be approximately 3 weeks from the day of your operation.

### **General Post-Operative Instructions**

The instructions in this letter will help you with your recovery, and give you an idea of what to expect in the next few days. If you have any problems or questions not covered in these instructions, call Dr. Conter's office at (717)-735-9187.

**Discomfort or Pain-** Although we strive to make your surgery as pain free as possible, you can expect to have some discomfort or pain in the area of your incision and the surrounding tissue.

For the management of post-operative pain you have been given a narcotic pain medication, usually either Vicodin or Percocet. Please take them as directed. You should **not** take other medications containing Acetaminophen (Tylenol) while you are taking these medications. Do not wait for severe pain to set in before you take your next dose of this medication, as you begin to experience discomfort, take your next dose. This will minimize your discomfort, and you will actually end up taking less medication in the long run. You may apply an ice pack over the area of your incision as needed. The ice pack should only remain over the area for 20 minutes at a time.

Many of our patients find that an anti-inflammatory agent such as Ibuprofen is helpful and often all that is necessary to control discomfort. We would recommend that you use a non-steroidal (NSAID) medication such as Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil). You may take 400-800 mg. up to three times each day with your meals. This will provide a baseline level of pain reliever in your system, and minimize the need to take the narcotic pain pills. If you have had a problem with ulcers in the past, you should not take this (NSAID) medication. If you need a refill on pain medication, you

must call the office before 4 p.m. **Pain medicine can not be refilled at night or on weekends.**

Constipation is a common side effect of the narcotic pain pills. Constipation will cause you to strain and may increase your discomfort. We would recommend that you take Miralax, as directed on the bottle, to help keep your bowel movements more regular. If necessary, you may also consider Milk of Magnesia. Take 1 tablespoon every evening.

**Bandage-** You may remove your dressing in 48 hours and do not have to replace your bandage unless your incision is draining. If you have steri-strips (white pieces of tape) across your incision, do not remove them. We will remove them at your follow-up appointment unless they fall off on their own.

**Bruising or Numbness-** Numbness around or near the incision is normal; also bruising around the incision is normal.

**Redness at incision site-** If you develop redness at your incision site, please contact the office at (717)-735-9187.

**Drainage-** Some drainage from your incision is normal. Normal drainage would be clear/yellow to faintly bloody and does not smell. Call the office if your drainage has a foul odor.

**Fever-** Call the office if your temperature is over 101 degrees. A temperature of 99-100 degrees is normal.

**Hygiene-** You may shower 48 hours after your operation. No tub bathing.

**Diet-** Begin by eating light foods, and advance diet as you tolerate it.

**Driving-** You may begin driving when you are:

1. no longer taking any narcotic pain medicines.
2. able to enter and exit the vehicle comfortably.
3. twist and turn without discomfort.

**Deep Breathing and Coughing (for abdominal incisions)-** Breathe deeply and cough several times a day for 1 week. These exercises help clear your lungs and lower your risk of pneumonia. Support your incision with a pillow when you cough.

**Postpone important decisions and signing of important papers for at least 24 hours.** Anesthetic effects may last for at least one full day after your operation.

**Contacting our Office-** If you have any problems or questions not covered in these instructions our office can be contacted during normal business hours by dialing (717)-735-9187. If you or your responsible adult caregiver feels that an emergency exists after your discharge to your home, please immediately go to your local hospital emergency department or call 911. Numbers for Lancaster hospitals are:

Lancaster Regional Medical Center: (717)-291-8211  
Heart of Lancaster Medical Center: (717)-628-5000  
Lancaster General Hospital: (717)-544-5511