

# Lymph Node Removal Surgery (Lymphadenectomy) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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## How long will I be in the hospital after my surgery?

- The length of your hospital stay will depend on your type of surgery and your recovery after surgery. You may be discharged the day of surgery or the day after surgery.

## How will my pain be controlled after surgery?

- As a part of healing, you can expect to have some pain after surgery. It is important to keep pain under control to help with your recovery. Your health care team will offer different ways to help you manage your pain. Please review “Pain Relief After Surgery” in your booklet for more detailed information.

## Will I have any activity restrictions after my surgery?

Your activity restrictions will depend on your type of surgery and your general health. Activity restrictions will be discussed with you and your caregivers before discharge from the hospital. These restrictions will include:

- **Do not** lift more than 5 to 10 pounds while your drain is in place, and for an additional 2 weeks after your drain is removed.
- You may shower daily with soap and water. It is important to rinse your incision thoroughly with water after using soap.
- **Do not** let your incision soak in water. You **may not** use a pool, bathtub, or hot tub for at least 4 weeks after your drain has been removed.

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**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

Based on your type of surgery, you may have more instructions to follow. For example:

- Cervical (neck) lymphadenectomy: No other restrictions.
- Axillary (underarm) lymphadenectomy:
  - ▶ On the side where your lymph nodes were removed, keep your arm tucked against your side.
  - ▶ As much as possible, try to not let your arm move away from your side. For example, when you wash your hair, lower head down and try not to lift your arms.
  - ▶ Wear your compression garment every day for 3 months. However, you may remove this garment when showering and sleeping.
- Inguinal (groin) lymphadenectomy:
  - ▶ Take a 20 minute walk, 3 times each day. Walk at a calm/slow pace and try to lift your leg on the side in which you had surgery as much as possible.
  - ▶ Wear your compression garment every day for 3 months. However, you may remove this garment when showering and sleeping.

### **Will any surgery drains be placed during my surgery?**

- Surgical drains will be placed during your procedure. Your health care team will teach you how to care for your drain at home before you are discharged from the hospital. Your health care team will let you know how long your drain will be in place.