

# Lymphadenectomy Surgery - What to Expect During Your Hospital Stay

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## Your Care Plan

We have created this care plan to help you and your family know what to expect after surgery. Changes may be made based on your needs and recovery.

## Each Day During Your Hospital Stay

- Ask your nurse and doctor about how you are doing.
- **Ask for pain medicine before your pain gets out of control.** Medicines will be ordered to help control your pain around the clock, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin). Talk to your nurse about any concerns you may have about taking these pain medicines.
- **Be active.** Your health care team will help you up to sit in a chair the evening of your surgery, and they will help you walk starting the day after surgery. The goal is to walk 3 times each day and increase the distance you walk every day.
- **Use your breathing exerciser** (incentive spirometer) 10 times every hour while you are awake.
- **Wear your compression wraps** (also called Sequential Compression Device or SCD) **on your legs to help prevent blood clots.** In addition, if you had an axillary (underarm) or inguinal (groin) lymphadenectomy surgery, you should use your prescribed compression garment every day for 3 months. You may remove it to sleep and shower.
- You will be asked if you are passing gas, having bowel movements, and if you are feeling hungry.
- You may be seen by a physical therapist (PT) or occupational therapist (OT) to help you walk, stand, and move with more ease.

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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.**

## Day of Surgery

- You will start with a clear liquid diet. Your diet will change to regular foods when you are ready.
- Your health care team will help you sit in a chair.
- You may have a catheter to empty your bladder. This is usually removed immediately after surgery or the morning after surgery.
- You may have drains and wound dressings (bandages) over your incision after your surgery. Your health care team will teach you how to take care of these before discharge.

## Day 1 After Surgery

- You will be helped out of bed to sit in a chair for 2 to 4 hours.
- Your health care team will help you walk 2 to 4 times.
- When you are able to drink or eat enough food without an upset stomach, your IV fluids will be stopped. Your IV site will then be capped until it is removed the day you leave from the hospital.
- Your health care team will teach you how to care for your drain, if applicable.
- Your health care team will teach you how to care for your compression garment, if applicable.
- You will meet with a case manager (PCRM) to begin making plans for your discharge.

## Getting Ready for Discharge

The length of your hospital stay will depend on your type of surgery and your recovery after surgery. You will be ready to leave the hospital when:

- You can drink fluids and eat regular food without an upset stomach
- Your pain is under control when taking pain pills
- You do not show any signs or have symptoms of an infection
- You know what your plan is for discharge and any services, equipment, or supplies that you need have been set up

## Day of Discharge

Your health care team will review the following items with you. Make sure you understand:

- How to care for your incision(s), drains, or wounds
- How to remove and put on your compression garments (for axillary and inguinal lymphadenectomy patients)
- Any activity restrictions
- Your medicines, including how much and when they should be taken, and any medicine side effects they may cause
- Your follow-up appointments
- When and who to call if you have problems

You will be given instructions in your After Visit Summary. You may also have prescriptions that you need to have filled at the pharmacy.

If you have questions or concerns about your surgery or care after leaving the hospital, please call:

- Surgical Oncology at 614-293-7171

After hours, on weekends and holidays, call the hospital operator at 614-293-8000. Tell the operator your surgeon's name, and they will have a member of the on-call team help you.

**If you have an emergency, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911.**