

After your Carotid Endarterectomy



UHN

For patients going home after surgery

Read this information to learn:

- how to take care of yourself at home
- what to expect
- who to call if you have questions

Patient Education

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Going home after surgery

Ask someone to help you for the first week you are at home. You will need help to prepare your meals, do housekeeping, visit your doctor and do other everyday activities.

If you do not have a support person please let your surgeon know before having the surgery.

The day after your surgery you will be discharged home from the Vascular Stepdown Unit.

What can I expect on the day I leave the hospital?

Discharge time is before 11:00 am. Talk to your nurse or doctor if you have any questions.

During your hospital stay, your medicines may change. Your nurse, pharmacist or doctor can review any changes with you.

Prescriptions will be given to you when you go home.

What symptoms may I feel as I recover?

Each person recovers at their own pace. Your recovery time will depend on things such as age, general health, and mental attitude.

Visit your family doctor for help to manage your symptoms.

Some symptoms you may have after your surgery are:

- Pain** As you become more active you may have some pain. We will give you a prescription for pain medicine when you are discharged.
- What to do** Take pain medicine as needed. This will help you to recover. A couple of days after surgery you may find that Tylenol® Extra-Strength is all you need for pain medicine.
- Bowel upset** Constipation is common when taking pain medication and reducing your activity. You may have an upset stomach.
- What to do** Drink plenty of fluids unless otherwise told by your doctor. If you have no other diet requirements or special needs, eat foods with more fibre such as bran breads and cereals, berries, dried fruit or prune juice. If needed, take a mild laxative. If this does not help, visit your family doctor.
- Feeling tired and trouble sleeping** You may feel tired after surgery. This is normal and may last several days.
- What to do** Take a nap every day. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day. Increase your activity as you recover. For example, take a walk each day. Ask a relative or friend walk with you, if possible.
- Emotions** You may feel tired and discouraged for several days or weeks after surgery. These feelings are normal. As you recover and regain your strength, this should improve.
- What to do** Take one day at a time. Give yourself enough time to recover.



How do I take care of myself at home?

- See your family doctor within 1 week after going home to have your blood pressure checked.
- If you have staples, your family doctor can remove them in 7 to 10 days. Your family doctor will follow your day to day recovery.
- Shower every day with mild soap. Pat the incision dry with a towel. This is all you need to do to clean your incision. Do not put lotions or cream on the incision until it is completely healed.
- You may gradually do more of your usual activities. Walk as much as your body can tolerate.
- **You will be off work for about 4 weeks.** This will depend on the type of work you do. Ask your doctor when it is safe for you to return to work.
- You may drive a car in 3 to 4 weeks after you check with your family doctor.
- You may lift up to 10 pounds (5 kilograms) for the next month). An example would be a small bag of groceries. Lifting more than 10 pounds may stress or tear the incision.
- Make an appointment to see your surgeon 6 weeks after surgery.

When should I call the surgeon?

Call your surgeon if you have any of the following:

- symptoms of a stroke (you suddenly can't see, you have trouble speaking, you can't move your hand, arm or leg, you lose consciousness)
- headache
- swallowing problems
- leaking from your incision
- redness or swelling around the incision site that you didn't have before

What is the long-term treatment for carotid artery disease?

An important step is to stop smoking. Smoking increases your chances of carotid artery disease and stroke. If you smoke, ask your doctor about programs and products that can help you quit.

Follow your your doctor's plan for treating high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. This can help stop blood clots from forming or plaque from building up in the carotid arteries.

Who do I call for more information?

If you have other questions once you go home or to book your 6-week follow-up appointment, please call your surgeon's office.

Dr. T. F. Lindsay 📞 416 340 4620

Dr. B. B. Rubin 📞 416 340 3645

Dr. G. D. Oreopoulos 📞 416 340 3275

Dr. G. Roche-Nagle 📞 416 340 5332

Dr. T. Forbes 📞 416 340 3274

Dr. J. Byrne 📞 416 340 3996

For non-emergency questions, call one of the Vascular Surgery Nurses below. **Please do not call the nurses to book appointments.**

Sue DeVries, Nurse Practitioner 416 340 4266

Cindy Dickson RN, BScN – Vascular Clinic Nurse 416 340 3857