Discharge Instructions
Carotid Subclavian Bypass

Activity

♦ Do not lift anything heavier than 5 pounds (1/2 gallon of milk) for the first 2 weeks.
♦ You will be given an arm sling while you are in the hospital. Do NOT raise your arm above your head for the next 2 weeks. Take your arm out of the sling 3-4 times a day and extend and flex (straighten and bend) your arm. We want you to maintain good physical strength and range of motion in the arm. After 2 weeks you may stop using the sling.
♦ No bending, straining, or strenuous activity for 2 weeks.
♦ No driving for 7 days or while taking prescription pain medications, but you may ride in a car. It is important that you have the ability to turn your head quickly without discomfort while operating a vehicle. This may not be possible for some people for 2-3 weeks after surgery.
♦ Walk as often as you wish. Walk short distances at first and increase slowly. Avoid exercising in extreme temperatures.
♦ You may go up and down stairs. Hold the rail for the first few days because you may experience some dizziness.
♦ If you smoke, please quit. Smoking increases you chances of developing heart disease, carotid artery disease, lung cancer, and worsens peripheral vascular disease. It can also delay wound healing.

Diet

♦ Resume the diet you were on before your surgery unless otherwise directed.
♦ For most people a low saturated fat and cholesterol diet which is high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains is a good healthy diet unless otherwise directed by your doctor.

Incision

♦ Your neck and shoulder incision is several inches in length. The sutures under the skin will dissolve on their own. Take a close look at the incision in the mirror so that you will know what it looks like before leaving the hospital and will notice changes if they occur at home.
♦ For the first couple of days sleep on a couple of pillows to help with the swelling in the neck around the incision.
♦ There will be an area of numbness along the incision in the neck and toward the chin. The earlobe may also be affected. This generally goes away and may last for 6-12 months.
♦ Men may find it more difficult to shave with a blade and may switch to an electric razor. Do not shave over the incision; go around it until the incision is healed.
♦ You may have some slight dizziness, a mild headache or tiredness for a few days.
♦ Your incision will take several months to heal completely. It may feel raised and thickened for a while and will decrease over time. It takes 2-3 weeks for the swelling to go away. No ointments, lotions, creams or bandages should be applied to the incision.
♦ If you have paper strips (steri strips) on the incision, they will fall off. After the first 2-3 days they will begin to loosen, and can be gently over the first week when you shower. In the meantime, the edges can be trimmed with scissors if you desire.
♦ Shower daily starting the first day after surgery. Use soap and water to gently clean the incision. Do not scrub the incision. Pat the incision dry and then dry off the rest of your body. Use a clean towel daily.
♦ Do not soak in a tub, whirlpool, or hot tub, or go swimming until the incision is completely healed. This is generally 3-4 weeks for most people.
Medications
You have been prescribed
Aspirin 81 mg daily
Plavix 75 mg daily
Coumadin
Other ________________________

It is VERY important that you take these medications as directed.

♦ One of the side effects of narcotic pain medications is constipation. Most people will have nausea if it is taken on an empty stomach. Eat a small snack with pain medication to avoid this side effect. Drinking plenty of fluid and eating high fiber foods (fruits, vegetables and whole grains) can help prevent constipation. If needed you may take Colace 100 mg (stool softener) once or twice a day. This can be purchased at any drug store. A laxative may be needed if the constipation continues. Generally, an over the counter laxative, such as Dulcolax tablets is recommended (take it as directed). If you take one dose of this laxative and your constipation is not relieved, call your nurse practitioner or physician assistant for further instructions.

♦ Your updated medication list will be given to you before you leave the hospital. New prescriptions will be provided to you and education regarding new medications provided. Please take the time to read this information. It is important for you to have a good understanding of what medications you are taking.

Call Your Surgeon for Any of These Symptoms @ (478) 743-9762
♦ Sudden or severe headache. A headache that will not go away.
♦ Changes in your eyesight, problem speaking, or problem swallowing.
♦ Weakness on one side of your body.
♦ Increased weakness, pain or loss of sensation (feeling) in the affected arm.
♦ New onset of numbness or tingling in the fingers on the affected side.
♦ Fever above 101 degrees.
♦ Difficulty breathing.
♦ Pus colored drainage from the incision.
♦ Opening (spreading apart) of the incision.

Reducing Your Risks
♦ All patients with vascular disease should take important steps to prevent worsening of their condition or development of new disease. It is very important that if you smoke to quit. Good medical management of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes, along with maintaining a normal body weight is encouraged to all of our patients. This is one of the reasons why routine follow-up with your primary care physician is very important to your continued health and well-being.

Returning to Work
♦ This is generally discussed at the follow-up visit. If you have a desk job you may be able to return to work in 2-4 weeks, as long as you can move around frequently. If you have a job that requires physical labor you may be off work for 6-8 weeks. If you want to return to work earlier than 4 weeks this should be discussed with your surgeon prior to leaving the hospital.

Follow-up appointment
♦ A follow-up appointment with your surgeon will be made for you prior to leaving the hospital. It will be 4 weeks after your surgery. It is extremely important that you keep this appointment for evaluation and recommendations for follow-up. You will have an ultrasound at this appointment to check the results of your bypass graft. Additionally, you need to make an appointment to see your primary care physician in 1-2 weeks of discharge from the hospital.