Discharge Instructions
AV Fistula or Graft Surgery for Dialysis Access

Please refer to the following instructions for your post-procedure care. Your surgeon or nurse practitioner will discuss any changes with you.

Activity
Avoid lifting more than five pounds (one gallon of milk) with the arm that had surgery until after your first post-operative visit. You are encouraged to walk as much as you can. You can slowly return to normal activities but must avoid strenuous activity and heavy lifting until your doctor tells you it’s OK. Heavy lifting can hurt the incision and cause a hernia. Avoid activities such as vacuuming, shoveling snow or swinging a golf club.

It is normal to feel tired for several weeks after your surgery. Do not drive until your doctor gives the OK and you are no longer taking prescription pain medications. It is also normal to have difficulty with sleep habits, eating, and bowel movements after surgery. These will go away with time.

You may drive after your post-op visit if you are healing as expected.

Bathing/Showering
You may shower after you go home. Do not soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or swim until the incision heals completely and the staples are removed.

Incision Care
Clean your incision with mild soap and water. Pat the area dry with a clean towel. You do not need a bandage unless otherwise instructed. Do not apply any ointments or creams to your incision.

You may have bandages called Steri-Strips over your incision. They will fall off on their own or will be removed at your post-op visit along with your stitches. Your arm may swell a bit after surgery. To reduce swelling, use pillows to elevate your arm so it is above your heart.

Your doctor or nurse practitioner will tell you if you need to lightly wrap your arm with an ACE™ bandage.

Diet
Resume your normal diet. There are no special food restrictions following this procedure. A low fat/low cholesterol diet is recommended for all patients with vascular disease.

Medications
Resume taking all of your medications unless your doctor or nurse practitioner tells you not to. If your incision is causing pain, you may take over-the-counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®).

If you were prescribed a stronger pain medication, please be aware these medications can cause nausea and constipation. Prevent nausea by taking the medication with a snack or meal. Avoid constipation by drinking plenty of fluids and eating foods with a high amount of fiber, such as fruits, vegetables, and grains. Do not take Tylenol® if you are taking prescription pain medications.

Follow Up
Make an appointment for a check-up for two to four weeks after discharge. Please call 856.342.2151 to schedule this appointment.

Please call us immediately for any of the following conditions:
- Severe or worsening pain in your legs or feet or in your abdomen back or chest
- Increased pain, redness, drainage (pus) from your incision site
- Increased abdominal pain, bloating, nausea, vomiting, or persistent diarrhea
- Fever of 101 degrees or higher
- Swelling in your leg(s)
- Severe or worsening pain at your incision site.
- Hand pain or numbness.

Reduce your risk of vascular disease:
- Stop smoking
- Manage your cholesterol
- Maintain a desired weight
- Control your diabetes
- Keep your blood pressure down

Dialysis
It will take several weeks for your new dialysis access to be ready for use. Your surgeon will evaluate your access site and will tell you when it is OK to use it. Your nephrologist will continue to direct your dialysis. You can continue to use your Permcath until your new access is ready for use.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 856.342.2151
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