

Going Home After Your Chest Surgery: **Lung Transplantation**

Vancouver General Hospital
899 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver BC V5Z 1M9
Tel: 604-875-4111

Follow-Up Appointment

Your first appointment is at 7:30 am Tuesday/Friday _____ (date) at the Transplant Clinic, 5th floor of the Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre, 2775 Laurel Street Vancouver, BC.

DO NOT take your anti-rejection medicines before your blood work. **DO** bring your medicines with you to take after your blood work is done. Bring your home monitoring log book to each clinic visit.

Clinic Telephone: 604-875- 4439

Monday to Friday 7:30am – 3:30pm

After hours, weekends and statutory holidays please contact the on-call physician at 604-877-2240 or 1-800-663-6189 for urgent concerns. Ask to speak to the Lung Transplant Doctor on-call.

Introduction

By now the Transplant Team has talked to you about going home. This booklet gives you general information about recovering from the surgery once you are at home. You will also receive a binder with more specific information about self care and home monitoring after a transplant.

Important Points to Consider

Activity

When you get home you may feel more tired than you expect. Do not let this get you down. This is normal and will improve over the next few weeks. You may need some help with grocery shopping, housework, cooking or yard work.

Your body will set limits for your activity. Adjust your activity depending on how you feel. Avoid fatigue! Experience has shown that you feel better, heal faster and gain confidence more quickly if you gradually increase your activity.

- Plan your day to allow yourself time for activity and rest.
- Slowly increase your walking distance on a daily basis and perform your post operative exercises as directed.
- If you experience sweating, shortness of breath or fatigue during any activity, you may be doing too much. Stop and rest. Start the activity later at a slower pace.
- Sometimes during surgery you are in the same position for a long time. This can cause shoulder pain and stiffness. To prevent this follow the exercises outlined in the back of this booklet and take your pain medicine regularly as prescribed.
- Try to get 8 hours or more of sleep each night. An afternoon nap may be helpful during your first few days at home.
- Avoid lifting, pushing or pulling objects heavier than 10 pounds (5 kilograms) for 6 to 8 weeks.
- You may start driving again when the Transplant Team agrees and if you feel safe to do so. If you are still taking pain medicines known as opiates or narcotics (for example oxycodone, hydromorphone or Tylenol with codeine) you **must not** drive. These medicines can make you drowsy.
- If you have any other activity you are wondering about, for example, golfing, swimming, diving, or skiing you should ask the Transplant Team.
- Expect to be off work at least 4 to 6 months. You can discuss this more with the Transplant Team.

Nutrition

- Eat a healthy diet with a variety of foods from all the food groups.
- Avoid eating products containing grapefruit (fruit or juice) as they affect the absorption of your medications.
- Avoid eating **raw** seafood (eg. sushi) as it may cause infection.
- Strive for a healthy weight with regular exercise. Transplant medications can affect your blood cholesterol, blood glucose, blood pressure and bone mass.
- Your dietitian will continue to follow you at the transplant clinic and modify your diet as needed.
- Take your vitamins and mineral supplements as directed.
- Use safe food handling practices (separating raw meats and fish from fruits and vegetables to avoid cross contamination, washing hands frequently, cleaning surfaces where food is prepared, and refrigerating foods properly). Refer to Health Canada's Food Safety Tips for People with Weakened Immune Systems <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/immune-sys-immunitaire-eng.php>

Constipation

Constipation can result from the use of pain medicines. The following can help prevent or treat constipation.

- Eat foods that are high in fiber or roughage. Fresh fruits, vegetables, prunes and bran are good choices. Include foods which have helped you move your bowels in the past.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of liquid a day.
- Be as physically active as possible.
- A laxative may be needed. Ask your doctor or nurse to recommend one.

Incision Care

- Your incision will usually have dissolvable sutures with steri-strips along the incision line. These steri-strips will fall off over time.
- Sometimes staples are used and these will be removed before you go home.
- You will also have one or two sutures where the chest drains have been removed. These are removed about a week after the chest drains come out.
- You may have a shower or tub bath. Do not let the water from the shower flow directly over your incision because the healing tissue may be very sensitive. Do not soak your incision in the bath until it is well healed. It is best to gently wash your incision with mild soap and water and gently pat dry. Antibacterial soaps should be avoided as these can irritate the skin.
- As your incision heals, it may become itchy. Do not rub or scratch your incision. Do not use Aloe and Vitamin E oils for 2 weeks or until the incision is well healed.
- Protect your incision from the sun. This will prevent your scar from permanently turning brown.
- Women may find it more comfortable to wear a loose fitting bra, elasticized camisole or tank top to provide some support.

Pain Medicine

- **Pain relief works best when medicine is taken regularly. Take your medicine as directed by your doctor.**
- Good pain relief will help you to return to normal activities faster. Regular activity helps to prevent chest infections and muscle stiffness around the chest and shoulders.
- Always take pain medicines with water or another liquid so they will dissolve and begin to work quickly. Your pain will lessen over time. You will be able to cut down on the amount of pain medicine you need over time.
- If your pain medicine is not working, tell the Transplant Team or your family doctor so that they can give you something else.
- Some pain medicines, such as “opiates”, cause drowsiness, dizziness and nausea. You must not drive a car or use potentially dangerous equipment while taking these medicines.
- Alcohol should also be avoided while taking pain medicines.

Other Medicines

After your transplant you will start taking many new medicines. The nurses and pharmacist will teach you about these medicines before you are discharged home. It is important for you to know the following information about your medicines:

- The name of each medicine.
- What the medicine does to help you.
- The recommended dose and when you should take it.
- What to do if you miss a dose.
- When to stop taking the medicine.
- Possible side effects.

***Check with the Transplant Clinic if any doctor prescribes you new medication. Do not take any over-the-counter medicines, including vitamins, minerals, and herbal products.**

Transplant Clinic Pharmacy: 604-875-5692
Monday to Friday 7:30am – 3:30pm

Immunosuppressant medicines are given to you by the Transplant Pharmacy. All other prescriptions are to be taken to your local pharmacy. Please give the Transplant Pharmacy at least one week’s notice when ordering medicines. Do not allow yourself to run out of your transplant medicines.

Follow up

Your first appointment at the Transplant Clinic is listed above. Clinic visits start out twice weekly and decrease over time to every 3 to 6 months to annually. Please let the Transplant Clinic Nurse know how to contact you at all times. Your nurse may be phoning you with changes to your medicines after reviewing blood work with the physician. Inform the clinic immediately of changes to your address or phone number. Before you leave the clinic, please make your next clinic appointment with the clerk.

Your Experience

We are always working to improve our service. If you have any concerns or wish to show your appreciation, please contact our Patient Services Manager, T12 Jim Pattison Pavilion, 899 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9.

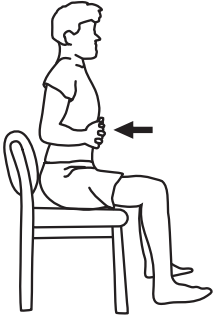
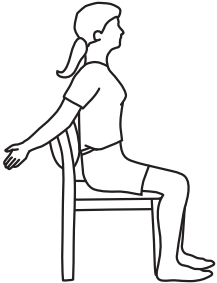
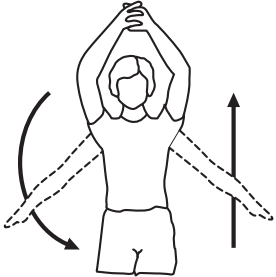
Questions to ask Hospital Staff

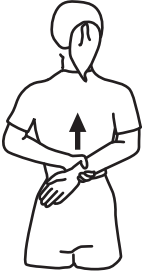


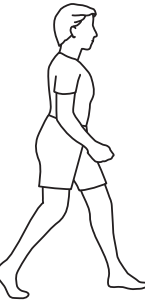
After reading this material, you may have some questions. Please write them down here so you do not forget to ask them.

Personal Exercise Program

Following a lung transplant, exercise is an important tool to regain your strength and improve your breathing. Please complete these exercises 3 times per day as prescribed by your physiotherapist. The physiotherapist will progress your exercises as appropriate.

After you are discharged from the hospital, we ask you to attend exercise classes at the Champion Lung Fitness Program at VGH.

	<p>Diaphragmatic breathing in sitting Relax your neck and shoulders. Correct your low back posture. Place your hand on your abdomen. You should feel your hand rise as you breathe in and breathe out.</p> <p>Repeat ____ times.</p>
	<p>Sit with your back straight and feet firmly on the floor. Pull your shoulder blades together while turning your thumbs and hands outwards. Hold position for 5 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat ____ times.</p>
	<p>Sit with hands clasped in front of you. Lift both arms forward over your head. Separate your arms sideways and take them back down to the starting position.</p> <p>Repeat ____ times.</p>

	<p>Stand with arms behind your back. Grasp the wrist of the arm you want to exercise.</p> <p>Slide your hands up your back.</p> <p>Repeat ____ times.</p>
	<p>Sit with your arms crossed or on your thighs.</p> <p>Stand up and sit down slowly on the chair. Do not lean against the chair.</p> <p>Repeat ____ times.</p>
	<p>Stand and hold onto the back of a chair.</p> <p>Raise up on your toes and hold for 5 seconds.</p> <p>Lower back down.</p> <p>Repeat ____ times.</p>
	<p>Walk for ____ (distance)</p> <p>____ times per day.</p>

Resources

CIBC Centre for Patients and Families

This Centre can help you find more information on your condition as well as local services and support available. The Centre is located on the main floor of the Jim Pattison Pavilion behind the Information Desk.
www.vch.ca/centreforpatients

The Lung Association

BC Lung Association
 2675 Oak Street
 Vancouver, BC V6H 2K2
 604-731-LUNG (5864)
 Toll free out-side lower mainland 1-800-665-LUNG (5864)
www.bc.lung.ca

The Lung Centre

Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre
 7th Floor, 2775 Laurel Street
 Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9
www.vch.ca/lung

Healthlink BC

Speak with a nurse, pharmacist or dietitian
 Services available in 130 languages
 Call 811
 For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance (TTY) call 711
www.healthlinkbc.ca

Thoracic Surgery at Vancouver Coastal Health

www.thoracicsurgery.bc.ca

Patient Services Manager

T12 Jim Pattison Pavillon,
899 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9.

BC Transplant

British Columbia Transplant Society
555 W 12th, Vancouver, BC V5Z 3X7
604-877-2240
www.transplant.bc.ca

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email pchem@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **FN.239.G65**

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The information in this document is intended solely for the
person to whom it was given by the health care team.

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