POST-OPERATIVE MINIMALLY INVASIVE
(ROBOTIC OR THORACOSCOPIC)
LUNG SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

ACTIVITIES

Walking is permitted and encouraged. Start with short walks and gradually increase the distance and length of time that you walk. Climbing stairs as tolerated is also permitted.

No lifting greater than 5 pounds for a full six weeks from the time of surgery. At two months gradually ease back into lifting.

Driving may be resumed four to six weeks following surgery. If you continue to take pain medication beyond this time, driving should be avoided.

Light range of motion exercises on the operative side is encouraged. This will help to stretch and strengthen the muscles and keep your shoulder moving freely.

WOUND CARE

All dressings are usually removed at time of discharge.

Steri-strips are placed over the 2 small chest incisions. These may be removed as they begin to lift off the wound. If they do not begin to do so, they may be completely removed 14 days after surgery. Moisten the strips with a little peroxide if they are stuck to the incision.

You may shower – wash the incision area gently with warm water and mild soap.

Any sutures or staples left in place at the time of discharge will be removed at the first office visit. You may place a small gauze pad or bandaid over the suture if needed.

MEDICATIONS

Pain medications will be prescribed for you at the time of discharge. We recommend Extra Strength Tylenol or Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc.) for mild to moderate pain. These can be purchased over-the-counter. For severe pain, Ibuprofen may be taken in conjunction with your pain medication.

Stool softeners (i.e. Colace) or laxatives (i.e. Milk of Magnesia) may be necessary following surgery if you do not have a spontaneous bowel movement. Call the office if the problem persists.

RETURN TO WORK
Most patients will be able to return to work or their usual level of activity within 4 weeks following surgery. This may need to be an individualized decision between you and your employer.

**TRAVEL**

Most patients should refrain from flying until after their incisions are healed sufficiently. This goal may vary for each patient. The decision to fly will be determined by your surgeon as it can depend on a number of factors.

**CALL THE OFFICE**

If you have any problems or questions, please call the office 323-442-9066. Call if you have persistent problems with:

- Fever greater than 101.5 degrees
- *Increasing* shortness of breath
- Pus, redness or drainage around the incisions
- Productive cough
- Pain or swelling of an extremity

**THINGS TO EXPECT**

Expect that for a time after surgery, stamina and strength will be slow to return and residual fatigue may be present. This is a normal process after any surgical procedure. Attempt to increase activities gradually but rest when necessary.

After thoracic surgery, breathing may be uncomfortable and there may be an element of shortness of breath or feeling “winded”. If this *increases* or breathing seems to be *more difficult* than at the time of discharge, please call the office.

Slight bruising, itchiness, and soreness at your incision is normal. Also, it is common to feel an area of numbness either in front of or around the incision site. This is a normal part of the healing process and you should not become alarmed.

**FOLLOW-UP**

Your follow-up appointment will include a chest x-ray, which you will get just prior to your appointment.

Please call the office 323-442-9066 one to two days after discharge to schedule a follow-up appointment.