

Advice for Care Takers

You are a responsible adult who will escort the patient home and provide care for the next 24hrs after the operation/procedure. Caretakers are advised for patients who have had IV sedation or general anesthetic. Patients who have had any injections for pain management may also need someone to escort them home.

The type of care the patient will need depends on the type of surgery. Please ensure the patient's safety and well being at home.

You can help with the following:

- ◆ Escort the patient home by car or taxi (not public transportation);
- ◆ Stay with him/her for 24 hours in your or their home;
- ◆ Help with household activities such as cooking and cleaning;
- ◆ Offer lots of fluids to drink (not alcohol);
- ◆ Help with washing/bathing and getting dressed;
- ◆ Ensure the patient take regular painkillers as prescribed/advised;
- ◆ Run necessary errands;
- ◆ Be aware of common complications following surgery and what to do, such as bleeding, oozing, signs of infection.

After 24-48 hours the patient should be feeling considerably better and will need less support and help.

Contact information

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Medical/Surgical Ward

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Post-Operative Information and Instructions



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HEALTH
SATISFACTION

The pillars defining our quality care

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St. Maarten Medical Center

Recovery

If you have had a general anesthetic you will be taken into the Recovery Room, where you will start to wake up. Family members are not allowed in this monitored care area. The type of procedure, anesthesia and your body's response, will determine the length of your recovery period. During your recovery period you may receive fluids through your veins (IV), until you can take fluids by mouth.

- ◆ Once you are stable, you will be transferred to your room and the surgical ward staff will continue your monitored care.
- ◆ Your surgeon will visit you and explain your case, any special instructions, diet, rest, and medications. This is the time for you or your immediate family to ask any questions you may have.
- ◆ The nursing staff will evaluate your pain level using a scale of 0 to 10; with 0 meaning no pain and 10 meaning the worst unbearable pain you have ever experienced.
- ◆ If you have unexpected problems, please inform your primary nurse.

When you are fully awake and your vitals are stable, a nurse will start to prepare you for your discharge, if you can be discharged. Your family will be notified duly to come and pick you up. Before you are discharged home, you will have a light refreshment, be up and walking around, and would have urinated.

Being discharged home

- ◆ The surgeon will visit you before you go home. You may be prescribed medications to take home with you; these may be pain relievers or medications related to your surgery or medical condition.
- ◆ Your nurse will give you your prescription and discuss this with you. If a patient needs a follow up care from the District Nurse, a transfer report will be given to you for the nurse.
- ◆ It is very important that you follow your discharge instructions, paying particular attention to those instructions related to your activity level and taking your pain medication.
- ◆ Make sure you have a follow-up appointment with your doctor and be sure to keep this. The ward clerk makes your appointment for you.
- ◆ If you or your relative have any questions before you leave, please make sure to speak to a member of the nursing staff.



Copies of Test Results

After discussing with your doctor the results of any tests carried out during your stay, you may request a copy from the ward staff.

General advice for going home

You may feel tired; only do as much as you feel able to do.

- ◆ Do not operate machinery or drive a car for 24-48 hours after a general anesthetic. If you have had a local anesthetic the nursing staff will advise when it is safe to drive or operate machinery.
- ◆ Drink plenty of fluids and eat light meals but **do not** drink any alcohol for at least 24 hours. If you had a local anesthetic the nursing staff will advise you when it is safe to start drinking alcohol.
- ◆ Follow any specific advice of the nursing and medical staff when taking prescribed medication – including painkillers.
- ◆ Try to arrange help with bathing or showering as you may feel light-headed when getting out of the bath or unsteady on your feet in the shower for the first 24 hours.
- ◆ Do not make any important decisions or sign any contracts for at least 24 hours after having had a general anesthetic or sedation.

If you feel you need to be seen by a doctor in an emergency, please contact your GP or go to the Emergency Room at the hospital.