



Patient & Family Guide

2024

# Living Kidney Donor Discharge Instructions



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# Living Kidney Donor Discharge Instructions

This pamphlet will give you information on how to heal and stay healthy after your kidney donation surgery.

## Eating and drinking

- Try to drink 8 to 10 glasses of fluids (like water) a day.
- Eat smaller meals and snacks until you feel well enough to go back to your regular meals.
- Avoid fatty foods and high-protein diets.

## Incision (cut) care

- You may have Steri-Strips™ (strong pieces of tape) over your incision to keep it closed. Often, the Steri-Strips™ will fall off on their own. If they do not fall off, you may remove them after 7 days.
- **Do not** take a bath, use a hot tub, or swim for 2 weeks (14 days) after your surgery.
- You may shower at anytime. Gently pat your incision dry. **Do not rub.**
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing.

## **Urinating**

- After your surgery, you will have a catheter (a thin, hollow tube) to help you urinate (pee).
- When the catheter is removed, you may have some urinary symptoms for a few days, like:
  - › A burning feeling when you urinate
  - › Not feeling like you need to urinate as much
  - › Not urinating as much as usual
  - › Blood in your urine
- These symptoms are common. They usually last for 2 to 3 days, but may last for 1 to 2 weeks (7 to 14 days).

## **Bowel movements**

- You may be constipated (not able to poop) after surgery. To help, try eating high-fibre foods (like bran or prunes).

## Activity

- Start to move more each day. Go slow. Start with short walks every day.
- You may feel more tired than usual for a few months after your surgery. This is common. Balance rest and exercise.

### **For at least 6 weeks after surgery:**

- **Do not** lift anything over 5 pounds.
- **Do not** do any activities that cause you to strain, like:
  - › Laundry
  - › Shoveling
  - › Vacuuming

You may do light housework (like washing dishes or sweeping).

- **Do not** climb a large number of stairs.
- **Do not** push or pull heavy things (like a stroller or grocery cart) for 4 weeks after surgery.
- You may start having sex again when you feel ready. For most people, this is usually 4 weeks after surgery.
- You may start driving again 2 weeks after your surgery. Check with your insurance provider for any restrictions.

## Feelings after surgery

- Some donors may feel let down after surgery. These feelings are normal. Talk with your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) if you feel this way.
  - › You can ask your donor coordinator for a referral to our donor social worker or our donor psychologist. They are here to support you.

## Medications

- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain as told by your doctor. **Do not** take Tylenol if you are allergic.
- **Do not** take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication (like Aleve®, Aspirin®, or ibuprofen).
- If you were taking prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, or herbal products before your surgery, your surgeon will tell what medications to keep taking, or when to start taking them again.
- Talk to your primary health care provider or pharmacist before starting any new natural health products.

## **Going back to work**

- Your surgeon will talk with you about when you can go back to work. For most people, this is 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.
- How soon you can go back to work will depend on:
  - › the type of work you do.
  - › your health and recovery.

## **Follow-up**

- You will have a follow-up appointment with your surgeon about 6 weeks after your surgery. You will get a requisition form to have blood work done 1 week before this appointment.
- You should see your primary health care provider:
  - › 3 months after your surgery.
  - › 6 months after your surgery.
  - › once every year.

## Post Donation Program

- The Living Kidney Donor Coordinator will talk with you about the Post Donation program before or after your surgery.
- The Post Donation Program is not required, but is recommended. Follow-up will include a visit every year to your primary health care provider to:
  - › check your overall health.
  - › check your blood pressure.
  - › check your urine.
  - › check your weight.
  - › have blood tests.
- Your primary health care provider will send the results to the post donation coordinators.
- If there are any results that need follow-up, the post donation coordinators will ask your primary health care provider for more tests or ask you to see a kidney specialist in your area.

**If you have any of these symptoms, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away:**

- › A fever over 38 °C or 100.4 °F **twice (2 times) or more in the first 1 to 3 weeks after surgery**
- › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), vomiting (throwing up), and you cannot keep down fluids, food, or medication
- › Pain in your abdomen (stomach area) that is not helped by pain medication
- › Swelling, warmth, redness, or cloudy or bad smelling drainage from the incision
- › Pain from the incision that does not get better
- › Severe (very bad) fatigue (tiredness)
- › Constipation for **longer than 1 week**
- › Cannot pass gas
- › Blood in your urine
- › Signs of a bladder infection (like pain or burning when you urinate, urinating a lot, or not being able to urinate)
- › Feeling confused or dizzy
- › Slurred speech (cannot speak clearly)
- › Trouble breathing or chest pain
- › Fainting



## Reimbursement Program

You may be able to get reimbursed (get money back) for some of the costs of being a living organ donor. You must submit forms for this. If you have questions, ask your donor social worker or the Living Kidney Donor Coordinator.

### Important phone numbers

#### Living Kidney Donor Coordinator

› Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Donor social worker

› Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Surgeon

› Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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WQ85-2407 © May 2024 Nova Scotia Health Authority  
To be reviewed May 2027 or sooner, if needed.