



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

DAY OF SURGERY

DAY _____ **DATE** _____

THINGS TO EXPECT TODAY

- You will be transferred to an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) where your nurses will closely monitor your condition.
- You have various tubes, catheters, and intravenous lines (IV's). You can expect that they will be removed over the next few days.
- You may have a catheter in your back that will deliver your pain medication

THINGS WE WILL HELP YOU DO TODAY

After Surgery

- Your nurse will ask you to rate your pain using a pain scale from 1 to 10.
- You will be on bedrest, but you will be turning every 2 hours while you are awake.
- You will not be able to eat today, but you will receive your nutrition and medications intravenously.

Have a good night!



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

DAY 1 AFTER SURGERY

DAY _____ DATE _____

THINGS TO EXPECT TODAY

- You may be transferred from the ICU Area to a postoperative unit on a Surgical Floor where your nurses will continue to closely monitor your condition.
- You will have various tubes, catheters, and IV's. You can expect that they will be removed over the next few days.
- You will have morning blood tests done and X-rays taken.
- Your dressing will remain undisturbed over your surgical incision.
- You will be helped to get out of bed to a chair.
- Your nurse will “clap” on your back frequently encouraging you to cough, deep breath, and use the incentive spirometer. A chest physical therapist will also work with you on your breathing exercises.
- You will discuss your plan of care with your surgeon's nurse practitioner who will follow your progress throughout your hospital stay.
- You will meet with the social worker to discuss the discharge plan.

You can expect some discomfort after this operation, but this should not stop you from participating in daily activities. You can control your pain medication that will be given either through an epidural catheter or IV. This is known as Patient Controlled Anesthesia (PCA).

If you did not bring it with you, ask your family to bring in the Patient Information Packet you received in your doctor's office.



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

THINGS WE WILL HELP YOU DO TODAY

MORNING

- Sit up in bed. After the breathing tube is removed, it is important that you stay awake and do the coughing deep breathing exercises that your nurse will demonstrate.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time?
_____ You should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.

AFTERNOON

- Your nurse will help you sit in a chair.
- While you are out of bed your nurse will instruct you in the following activities:
 - march in place
 - leg lifts
- Use your incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake. How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time?

EVENING/NIGHTS

- Sit in the chair again!
- Your nurse will continue to ask you to rate your pain. Your PCA may need to be adjusted.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least ten times every hour while you are awake. Remember, you should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.
- You will be weighed this evening.
- The nursing staff will be making rounds. If you need something, please ask.

GREAT JOB! HAVE A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP!



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

DAY 2 AFTER SURGERY

DAY _____ DATE _____

THINGS TO EXPECT TODAY

- You have various tubes, catheters, and IV's. You can expect that some of them may be removed today.
- You will have morning blood tests done.
- You will have your surgical incision dressing removed by the Vascular surgery team.
- You will be helped out of bed to the chair.
- A physical therapist will continue to do deep breathing and coughing exercises with you. Your nurse will continue to help you with this as well.
- Your nurse will encourage you to stay out of bed for longer periods of time, an important part of your recovery.
- You may move to a regular room. Let your nurse know if you prefer a private room. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.
- You may begin to walk, with assistance, in the hallway. Your nurse will let you know.

THINGS TO DO TODAY

Read the information in the Patient Packet on "While in the Hospital." It will explain what to expect during your hospital stay.

MORNING

- Sit in the chair. Get washed.
- Continue to rate your pain.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time?



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

_____ Remember, you should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.

- Continue to do your breathing exercises (coughing and deep breathing) and turn side to side while in bed as these activities are a very important part of your recovery!
- Begin to learn about your medications and discharge needs from your nurse.

AFTERNOON

- Sit in the chair.
- While you are out of bed, perform the activities your nurse taught you to do yesterday.
 - march in place
 - leg lifts
- If your nurse tells you that it is okay, walk around in your room with your family or ask a member of the nursing staff to accompany you.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least ten times every hour while you are awake.
- Prepare for discharge in 3-4 days. Who will accompany you?
Name _____ Phone _____ Speak with your nurse or social worker if you have any questions. Discharge is at 10 AM.

EVENING/NIGHTS

- Sit in the chair again!
- Use your incentive spirometer at least ten times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time? _____ Remember, you should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.
- You will be weighed this evening.
- Take another walk with family, friends or a member of the nursing staff.
- Ask questions about your medications and discharge plan.
- The nursing staff will be making rounds. If you need something, please ask.

GREAT JOB! HAVE A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP!



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

DAY 3 AFTER SURGERY

DAY _____ DATE _____

THINGS TO EXPECT TODAY

- You may have the tube in your nose removed today if your bowels resume activity.
- If you have an epidural catheter, it will be removed once you can tolerate sips of clear liquids. You will then begin to take your pain medication by mouth. Your diet will be advanced to solids as tolerated.
- You may have morning blood tests done.
- You may be visited by your physical therapist again today. It is important to keep up with the deep breathing and coughing exercises that you have learned.
- Your nurse will encourage you to increase the amount of walking you do daily. This is an important part of your recovery.

THINGS TO DO TODAY

Read the section in your packet on **Discharge Instructions**. If you did not bring it to the hospital ask your nurse for a copy of the **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Surgery Discharge Guidelines**. It gives you specific information about what to expect at home and guidelines for when to call the doctor.

MORNING

- Go to the bathroom and get washed up. Ask your nurse if you can take a shower.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time?
_____ Remember, you should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

- Take your pain medication as needed to enable you to increase your activity. Remember the nurse will ask you to rate your pain before and after taking it.
- Continue to do your breathing exercises (coughing and deep breathing) and turn side to side while in bed as these activities are a very important part of your recovery!
- Ask your doctor if you are still going home in 2-3 days.
- After your Foley catheter is removed, your nurse will ask you to save all your urine so it can be measured.
- Go for a walk with friends, a family member, or a member of the nursing staff.

AFTERNOON

- Sit in the chair.
- Tell your nurse if you have pain. Take your pain medication to make sure you are comfortable to help you increase your activity and do the coughing and deep breathing exercises. The nurse will continue to ask you to rate your pain using a pain scale.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake.
- It is important that we know when your normal bowel activity has returned. Let your nurse know if your belly begins to rumble, grumble, or you expel gas.
- Take another walk in the hallway with family, friends, or your nursing staff.

EVENING/NIGHTS

- Sit in the chair again! Ask your nurse about your pain management program.
- Use the incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time? _____ Remember, you should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.
- You will be weighed this evening.



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

- Take another walk in the hallway with family, friends, or your nursing staff.
- Ask some more questions about your medications and discharge plans.
 - Do your family and friends know of your discharge date?
 - Ask about the care of your incision once you get home.
- The nursing staff will be making rounds, if you need something please ask.

GREAT JOB! HAVE A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP!



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

DAY 4 AFTER SURGERY

DAY _____ DATE _____

THINGS TO EXPECT TODAY

- Your nurse will continue to encourage you to stay out of bed for longer periods of time. This is an important part of your recovery.
- You may be able to take a shower today. Ask your nurse.
- You will continue to advance your diet as tolerated.
- If you tolerated sips of water, you may begin to take oral medication for your discomfort today. Your nurse will explain your new pain management program.

THINGS TO DO TODAY

Review the **Discharge Guidelines** information. Write down and ask any questions you have.

Look at your incision so you can identify any changes that occur after discharge.

MORNING

- Continue to rate your pain.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least ten times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time? _____ Remember, you should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.
- Continue to do your breathing exercises (coughing and deep breathing).
- Go for a walk. Try to go farther than you did yesterday.
- Begin to write a list of questions you have about your discharge.

AFTERNOON

- Enjoy your meal.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least ten times every hour while you are awake.
- Go for a walk in the hallway. Walk a little further than you did yesterday.
- Let your nurse know if you have a bowel movement.



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

- Continue your deep breathing and coughing exercises.
- Read the information in your packet about activity limitations during your recovery period.
- Prepare for discharge. Speak with your nurse or social worker if you have any questions.

EVENING/NIGHTS

- Remain out of bed and walk around as much as possible. Ask your nurse about your pain management program.
- Use the incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time? _____ Remember, you should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.
- You will be weighed this evening. If your weight is around to 3 to 5 pounds above your pre-admission weight, this will be your last weight taken.
- Continue to rate your pain.
- Take another walk in the hallway with family, friends, or a member of the nursing staff. Show them how far you can walk!
- Ask questions about your medications and discharge plans.
 - A nutritionist is available to speak with you and your family about your dietary needs at home.
 - Review the discharge handout and medication sheets that your nurse has given to you.
- The nursing staff will be making rounds. If you need something please ask.

GREAT JOB! HAVE A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP!



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

DAY 5 AFTER SURGERY

DAY _____ DATE _____

THINGS TO EXPECT TODAY

- You may still require oral medication for your discomfort today. Let your nurse know how you feel.
- Depending on your progress, you may go home today.

THINGS TO DO TODAY

MORNING

- Get washed up.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time? _____ Remember, You should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.
- Continue to do your breathing exercises (coughing and deep breathing).
- Go for a walk. Try to go farther than you did yesterday.
- Do you have any other questions about your discharge? Write them down.
- Tell your nurse if you have not moved your bowels since surgery.
- Your physician will decide if you may be discharged today. If so, proceed to “Day 6 After Surgery.”

AFTERNOON

- Enjoy your lunch. Remember, the better you eat, the better you heal.
- Continue your deep breathing and coughing exercises and go for a walk.
- Have family members take home most of your belongings.



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

- Do you have any questions about the medication you will be taking at home? Ask your nurse for the medication instruction sheets if you have not already received them.
- Do you have questions about your discharge instructions?
- You will be discharged tomorrow. Discharge time is 10 a.m. Confirm transportation home. Ask for prescriptions for any new medications started during this hospitalization.

EVENING/NIGHTS

- Remain out of bed and walk around as long as possible.
- Use the incentive spirometer at least 10 times every hour while you are awake—How high did you get the incentive spirometer this time? _____ Remember, you should breathe in slowly and deeply to achieve maximum benefit.
- Take another walk in the hallway with family, friends, or your nursing staff. Show them how far you can walk!
- Ask questions about your medications and discharge plans.
 - Have you received the prescriptions for your medications that were prescribed during this admission?
 - Any last minute questions about how to care for your incision?
 - Ask the person who will be taking you home tomorrow to arrive no later than 9 AM.
- The nursing staff will be making rounds. If you need something please ask.

GREAT JOB! HAVE A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP!



Traditional Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Surgery

DAY 6 AFTER SURGERY

DAY _____ **DATE** _____

THINGS TO EXPECT TODAY

- You will be discharged from the hospital by 10 AM.
- You will have a list of discharge instructions.
- You will know when your doctor needs to see you again.
- Your abdominal staples will usually be removed on your first visit with the surgeon following discharge.

THINGS TO DO TODAY

MORNING

- Enjoy your breakfast.
- Take a shower and get dressed.
- Review and sign your discharge instructions.
- Obtain prescriptions for any new medications started during your hospitalization.

Good Bye and Good Luck!

Best wishes for a speedy recovery,

The Staff at NYUHC