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INTRODUCTION

You have been scheduled to be admitted to NYU Medical Center for wrist repair surgery. Please take time to read this handout which has information that should answer many of your questions. This handout discusses what you can expect during your stay in the hospital and when you go home. It describes how the members of the healthcare team physicians, nurses, and others will work with you, the most important team member, to ensure a smooth transition home. Please share this information with your family members and/or friends.

Depending on the type of surgery you had, it is anticipated that you will be ready for discharge 1-2 days after surgery, although, this will vary depending on your specific needs. Many people are surprised at how quickly their activity progresses after surgery. The health care team will be helping you with any concerns you have about discharge.

BEFORE SURGERY

PRE-ADMISSION TESTING

Several days to a week before your surgery, you will be scheduled for an appointment at Pre-Admission Testing. At this appointment you will:

- Have an interview and an assessment with a nurse and a resident from your surgeon's service.
- Meet with an anesthesiologist who will explain the type of anesthesia you will have.
- Have blood tests, EKG and in some cases, a chest x-ray.
- Sign a consent form giving your permission for the surgery after it has been explained to you.
- Have additional tests if they are indicated.

ADDITIONAL PREPARATION

- Shower the night before or morning of surgery.
- The morning of surgery take your medications with a sip of water as recommended by your physician. If you are taking diuretics (water pills) or medications for diabetes, make sure you get specific instructions.
- If you are taking Coumadin (warfarin), check with your doctor for specific instructions.
- Avoid aspirin, aspirin containing products and medications from the class known as non steroidal anti-inflammatory agents for one week prior to surgery. However if you are taking aspirin once a day for heart, vascular or neurological reasons, check with your doctor for specific instructions.

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.
- You only need to bring slippers and a robe to the hospital. Please do not bring any valuables, such as jewelry, cash or credit cards, to the hospital.

DAY OF SURGERY

You should report to the Same Day Admit Unit, 400 East 34th Street, at the time specified. Here you will be admitted and final preparations for surgery will be completed.

- Immediately before you go to the Operating Room you will need to change into a hospital gown and remove all jewelry, including wedding ring, dentures, etc.
- You may be given a sedative to help you relax.
- The surgery will generally take _____ hours (preparation and actual surgery) and _____ hour in the Recovery Room.
- Your visitors can wait in the Same Day Admit waiting area (maximum of 2 visitors), or in the Stoler Family Waiting Area in the Tisch Hospital lobby. It is advisable for one contact person to let the surgeon's office know where he/she can be reached so he/she can be contacted after surgery.

Immediately after surgery you will be taken to the Recovery Room on the 6th floor or the 10th floor until the effects of the anesthesia wears off. Generally, from the Recovery Room you will be transferred to a room on one of the surgical floors. Visitors are not allowed in the Recovery Room but your family members or friends will be able to visit you soon after you are transferred to your room.

WHILE IN THE HOSPITAL

ASSESSMENT

- Your nurse will monitor your condition. Your blood pressure, pulse and temperature will be taken. Your nurse will also check your operated hand for color and temperature.
- The dressing over your incision will be checked.

DIET

- Your usual diet will be resumed the evening after surgery.

ACTIVITY

- You will be allowed out of bed the evening after surgery. The nursing staff will help you get out the first time.
- Your operated hand and wrist will be positioned in a foam block in the Operating Room. You need to keep your hand in the block at all time until instructed otherwise. Elevating your hand above the heart will reduce swelling.
- If you had an iliac crest bone graft, you will meet with a physical therapist for ambulation training.
- Use the incentive spirometer 10 times every hour while awake to prevent possible lung problems. Follow with coughing and deep breathing exercises.
- You can shower the day after surgery unless you had a iliac crest bone graft. Ask your nurse for a plastic cast cover to cover the cast or dressing. If you had a iliac bone graft, you cannot shower.

MEDICATIONS

- You may receive several doses of IV antibiotics. After this, they may be changed to antibiotics that can be taken orally.
- Pain medication will be given to you by injection or orally the day of surgery. By the day after surgery, pain medication will be given orally.
- Other medications you took before surgery will be resumed. Ask your nurse if you do not receive your usual medications. **DO NOT TAKE** your own medication.
- If you had a wrist fusion with iliac bone graft, you may receive steroid medications. They will be given intravenously at first, then changed to pill form. Ask for an information sheet on it. Remember to take with food or milk.

INCISION CARE

- You will have a dressing or cast over the incision.
- If you have swelling, numbness or tingling or if your fingers becomes discolored (pale or bluish), let your nurse know right away.
- If you had an iliac bone graft, the site will be covered with a dressing. Your doctor and nurse will give you specific instructions regarding caring for your incision.

DISCHARGE PLANNING

- It is anticipated that you will be discharged the day after surgery. Think about questions you have so that you can remember to ask the doctor and nurse.

GENERAL DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

DIET

- You can resume your usual diet.

MEDICATIONS

- You will be given a prescription for pain medication. Do not take more or for a longer period of time than your physician recommends.
- Generally, you can resume all medications you took prior to surgery. Ask your doctor for specific instructions.
- If you receive a prescription for a steroid medication, make sure you know the exact schedule for taking it. Remember to take it with food or milk.

ACTIVITIES

- You will be discharged with a foam block. Make sure that you use it at all times until the surgeon instructs you otherwise. Your hand should be above your heart.
- You can shower using a plastic cast cover to cover your arm cast/dressing. If you did not have a iliac bone graft. If you had a iliac bone graft, speak to your doctor for specific instructions about when you can shower.
- Speak with your doctor about when you can resume usual activities.

INCISION CARE/ARM

- If you have a cast, follow the cast care instructions.

FOLLOW-UP

- Make a follow-up appointment to see your surgeon as directed for suture removal.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

Contact your doctor for the following possible danger signs:

- fever over 101°
- increasing pain not relieved by pain medication taken at the prescribed doses and times.
- swelling
- numbness, tingling or change in color of fingers, such as white or blue, in operated hand
- redness or drainage from graft site if iliac bone graft done.