

# POST-OPERATIVE DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS



**Patient Name:**

**Date Received:**

---

## GOING HOME WITH A HEIMLICH VALVE

---

**EXPECTED DATE OF DISCHARGE**

- Be prepared to be discharged home by 10:00 am

**NUTRITION**

- **No restrictions.** Follow Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating for a balanced diet
- Avoid constipation by eating foods high in fibre (whole grain breads and cereals, fresh vegetables and fruit) and drinking plenty of fluids

**ACTIVITY**

- **DO NOT SMOKE.**
- Do not lift greater than 5 to 10 pounds for 3 to 4 weeks after your surgery
- Do not go swimming while the chest tube is in
- After 3 to 4 weeks, resume *normal activities* as tolerated unless specified by your doctor

**PAIN MEDICATION**

- You may be given a prescription for pain medication. Take as directed.
- Read all instructions for taking your medications and possible side effects

**HYGIENE**

- You may shower with a waterproof dressing over the chest tube, insertion site and the valve. Put a piece of saran wrap over the tube, site and valve. Tape all the edges down to keep the water out.
- Do not put the Heimlich valve directly into water. Do not obstruct the tip of the valve that is open to air.
- Do not soak in a bathtub or hot tub while the chest tube is in or until your incisions are healed.
- Do not put lotions, powders, or any ointment on the chest tube insertion site.

**DRESSINGS**

- Keep dressing on the site as dry as possible
- If there is drainage from the valve, gauze can be wrapped around the end of the valve
- Empty sputum bottle at the end of the valve as needed

**OTHER**

- Home care will be arranged prior to your discharge from the hospital for Heimlich Valve care, management, and teaching

**FOLLOW UP**

- Follow-up visits with your doctor may be weekly or every other week. A chest x-ray will be done to make sure your lung remains expanded
- Make an appointment to see your doctor as directed in \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.

**CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IF:**



1. **The chest tube falls out, tape gauze tightly to your skin covering where the chest tube went in, then go to the Emergency department immediately**
2. The heimlich valve comes loose. Reattach it right away. Then call your doctor.
3. You have a sudden onset of sharp chest pain with shortness of breath
4. You have increased tenderness or pain that doesn't go away with pain medication
5. You have signs of infection:
  - Increased redness or warmth at the chest tube insertion site
  - Pus-like drainage
  - Large amounts of swelling or bleeding
  - Temperature (by mouth) greater than 38 C or 100.4 F for two readings taken 4 hours apart

Revised: April 2013

Approved By: Service of Thoracic Surgery