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