



It is important for patients to identify a **discharge education support person**. This person can be a spouse, partner, friend or relative

Our patients tell us that it is helpful to have another person learn the discharge teaching with them since it can be difficult to remember everything once they return home.

When you get to your room after surgery your RN will ask who your **discharge education support person** is:
NAME : **PHONE NUMBER:**

Discharge Education for Orthopedic Patients

1. Q: **Should I continue to take pain medication at home?**

A: Yes. Take the medication as prescribed when you are having pain, before you work with the Physical Therapist and prior to working on your exercises.

2. Q: **Do I need to take medication to prevent constipation?**

A: Yes. Take a stool softener and a stimulant laxative DAILY until you stop taking narcotic pain medication.

3. Q: **Can I shower?**

A: Yes. Keep your incision covered and dry while showering until the staples or steri- strips are removed.

4. Q: **How do I care for my incision?**

A: Look at your incision once a day to see how it is healing and to observe for signs of infection. Change the dressing daily after showering or more often if the incision is draining. If the incision is not draining, cover when showering, otherwise keep open to air.

5. Q: **When should I call the doctor?**

A: Call the doctor for these reasons:

- ❖ **Signs of Infection** : increased redness, swelling or drainage of the incision, temperature of 101.5 ° F or greater
- ❖ **Pain** not relieved by rest, ice, or medication
- ❖ **Swelling** or sharp pain at the operative site

6. Q: **Is taking a blood thinner important?**

A: Yes. Orthopedic patients often go home on medication to prevent deep vein thrombosis. Take this medication at the same time each day and for the entire length of time it is prescribed.

If your doctor prescribes **enteric coated aspirin** for you, remember it is being prescribed as a blood thinner, not for pain. Make sure you take it as prescribed.

If your doctor prescribes **Coumadin** for you, take a Coumadin booklet home with you to read. It will answer many questions you may have. If you take a fall while on Coumadin, go the Emergency Room to be evaluated right away.

7. Q: **Is there any other important information I need to know?**

A: Yes. Pulmonary embolism can be a complication of having surgery. If you experience sudden onset of shortness of breath or chest pain, **CALL 911**.

Place on refrigerator for reference.