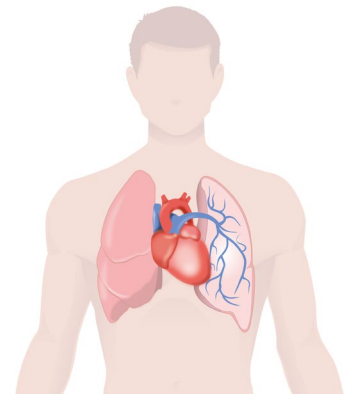


Self-care in the months after lung surgery



You're getting ready to go home after your lung surgery (pneumonectomy or lobectomy). Here is some information that will help you take care of yourself over the next few months.

Is it normal to feel pain?

It's normal for pain to last for several weeks after surgery, but it should gradually subside. **Don't just live with pain.** Take the medication you were prescribed for pain relief. You'll recover more quickly if the pain is under control. Also, make sure you take the medication you were prescribed to prevent constipation. Pain-killers can cause constipation.

It's important to keep moving to get your strength back, despite the pain you may feel.

Is it normal to feel tired?

It's normal to feel more tired than usual and to get out of breath more easily after an operation. Over the next few weeks, you will gradually regain your energy and strength. Here are some suggestions to help with your recovery:

- take a short naps during the day, whenever you feel the need.
- or
- relax after an activity that's the least bit tiring.



When will the bandage on my chest drain be removed?

The bandage should be removed about 72 hours after you leave the hospital, as recommended by your care team or your doctor.

If you have stitches around the chest drain, they should be removed about 10 days after surgery. It's important to follow the recommendations made by your medical team.

When will my stitches or staples be removed?

Stitches are made with a special thread that dissolves on its own. If you have staples holding your wound together, they should be removed about 10 days after your operation. It's important to follow the recommendations made by your medical team.

If you have adhesive strips on your wound, don't take them off. They'll fall off on their own.

Am I allowed to take a bath or shower?

You can take a shower as soon as your drain bandage has been removed. Here are some recommendations:

- avoid getting your wound directly in the stream of water
- use a mild soap
- gently dry off the adhesive strips, if you have any

Avoid taking a bath if you possibly can.

Is there anything in particular I should be eating?

You can start eating normally as soon as you get home. Bear in mind that a varied and balanced diet will help heal your wound, as well as make it easier to resume normal activities and help you reach and maintain a healthy weight.

It's normal not to have much of an appetite after surgery. Here's some advice to help you with that.

- Eat healthy, balanced meals (see *Canada's Food Guide* for recommendations).
- Have three meals a day and between-meal snacks.
- To help heal your wound, choose high-protein foods: lean meat, poultry, fish, seafood, tofu, legumes, eggs, dairy products, nuts and grains.
- Limit your consumption of coffee, tea and soft drinks.
- To prevent constipation, eat more fibre-rich foods: fruit, vegetables, whole-grain bread and whole-grain pasta.



Am I allowed to drink alcohol?

Once you stop taking strong pain-killers derived from morphine or codeine (e.g. Dilaudid, Supeudol, Empracet), you are allowed to drink a moderate amount of alcohol.

How soon can I resume my regular activities?

As soon as you get home, you can gradually resume most activities. But, there are some things you should avoid during the first two months.



Activities you can resume right away:

- taking walks out of doors
- going up and down the stairs
- doing some light housework (dishes, dusting, mopping, etc.)
- sexual activities



Activities you should avoid for about 6 to 8 weeks:

- making brusque movements (slamming the car door, shaking out rugs or clothing, playing golf, etc.)
- lifting heavy objects (grocery bags, children, large containers of laundry detergent or bleach, etc.)
- pulling heavy objects (vacuum, golf bag, a child in a sled, etc.)
- pushing heavy objects (lawnmower, stroller, furniture, etc.)

Are there some particular exercises I should be doing?

Until you resume your regular activities, continue with your breathing exercises and the exercises for the shoulder on the operated side of your body, as recommended by your physiotherapist.

Am I allowed to drive my car?

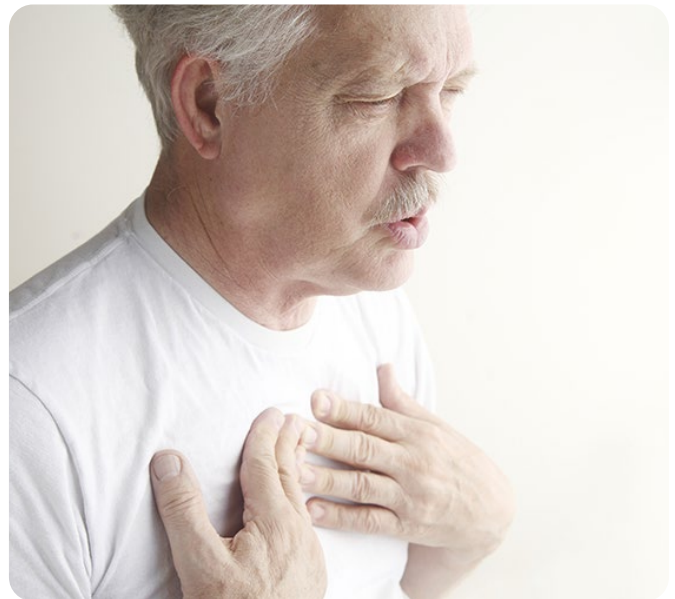
You won't be able to drive as long as you're taking strong pain-killers derived from morphine or codeine (e.g. Dilaudid, Supeudol, Empracet) and you have not regained your full mobility. Talk to your doctor.

What symptoms should I be watching out for?

Contact your care team right away if:

- you have trouble breathing
- you have chest pain that feels worse than usual
- you have a fever (over 38.5°C or 101°F)
- you see signs that your wound may be infected (pain, redness, heat, swelling, discharge)
- you have unusual pain in one of your legs

If you can't reach a member of your care team, call Info-Santé at **8-1-1** or go to a drop-in clinic, a CLSC or the emergency room at the nearest hospital.



Where should I go for help or answers to my questions?

If you have questions, feel free to contact your surgeon, pivot nurse, research nurse or the secretary in thoracic surgery.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Canadian Cancer Society:

> 1 888 939-3333

> cancer.ca

Quebec Cancer Foundation

Info-Cancer line:

> 1 800 363-0063

> fqc.qc.ca

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our web site

chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante



NOTEPAD



Questions



Resource people and contacts

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
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