

Taking care of yourself after soft tissue tumour removal surgery

Information for Dr. Ghert's patients – 905-387-9495, ext. 64089

When to call Dr. Ghert's office (during office hours) or the hospital (after office hours)

Call Dr. Ghert's office or the hospital if:

- you have a fever (38°C or greater)
- the redness in your limb gets worse or increases
- there is bleeding that gets worse or does not stop
- your pain suddenly gets worse or is not relieved by pain medication

If your dressing has some blood spots or gets dirty, you do NOT need to call Dr. Ghert's office or the hospital. Reinforce the dressing with extra gauze or pads from your local drug store.

Keep your foot or hand up

It is **very important** that you rest lying down with your operated leg or arm raised on pillows. Your foot or hand needs to be above your heart for several hours a day. This will help prevent swelling and promote healing of the tissues.

Care of incision

Please do not remove the dressing. Your dressing will be removed when you return for your follow-up visit with Dr. Ghert.

Care at home

Do not remove your dressing unless you are given permission by Dr. Ghert. Keep your dressing dry. If you shower, cover your dressing with a plastic bag or saran wrap. If needed, home care will be arranged to help you at home with your dressing.

Standing and walking

You may put all your weight on your operated leg unless you were told not to. Crutches or a cane may be recommended for a few days to provide more comfort and support right after surgery. If you are able, it is okay to climb stairs to get to the different rooms in your house.

Activity for leg surgery

- You may walk, climb stairs, and move about your house to do light activity. You may walk short distances outside.
- Please do the exercises prescribed by the physiotherapist in hospital.
- You need to elevate or raise your leg often to decrease swelling.
- When your leg is raised, do some pumping exercises to get the muscle working and the blood moving.

Do not:

- do any strenuous activity such as lifting, pulling, pushing heavy objects.
- stand or sit with leg on floor for a prolonged period of time.
- drive if the right leg is affected.

Activity for arm surgery

- You may walk, climb stairs, and move about your house to do non-strenuous activity.
- Only use the operated arm for light activity such as eating.
- A sling may be used for comfort measures. Remove it often to do the exercises prescribed by the Physiotherapist in hospital and when you are using it for light activity.
- When your arm is raised, make a fist with your hand. Open and close your hand. This gets the muscles working and the blood pumping.

Do not:

- drive until your strength and movement has returned to normal.
 - do any strenuous activity such as lifting, pulling, pushing. The heaviest weight you should lift for the first 2 weeks is a glass of water.
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Pain control

Follow the instructions given to you in hospital and take the medication as prescribed. The purpose of the medication is to permit you to feel comfortable enough to be able to increase your activity, to do your exercises, and to get sleep.

Constipation

Constipation is when you have hard stools which make it difficult to go to the bathroom. Most pain medications cause constipation. This, added to your decreased activity level may cause problems for you. To help prevent constipation:

- ✓ drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day,
- ✓ increase the fibre in your diet, and
- ✓ eat lots of fruit, vegetables and whole grains

If you have not had a bowel movement in 3 days, you may need to use a stool softener or bulk laxative. It is important to prevent constipation or at the first sign of a problem to get help. Talk to your nurse, pharmacist, or doctor if you have a problem.

Special instructions

If you have any concerns about your surgery,
please call Dr. Ghert.