

## Going Home After Spinal or Epidural Anesthesia

This handout explains what to expect at home after spinal or epidural anesthesia.

### Spinal or Epidural Anesthesia

These types of anesthesia are given through a small needle placed into the lower back. Your back may feel sore. This should get better over the next few days. Ask your surgeon what you can take to help the pain.

Someone age 16 or older should stay with you for the rest of today and tonight. You may feel a little sleepy for the next 12 to 24 hours. This is from the medicines you receive during and after surgery. Rest and relax for the next 12 hours.

### For the Next 24 Hours

- Only light activity.
- Don't drive.
- Don't use machinery or power tools.
- Don't drink alcohol.
- Don't make any important decisions. Do not sign important papers.
- Follow your doctor's advice about activity. Be careful when you sit or stand up. You may become dizzy if you sit or stand too quickly.

### Food and Liquids

- Start slowly.
- Drink clear liquids such as water, apple juice, and soft drinks.
- If you feel okay, you can try soup and soda crackers. Eat foods that are easy to digest.
- Avoid spicy or fatty foods.
- Drink at least 6-8 glasses of clear liquids so you don't get dehydrated.
- The next day you can eat a normal diet.

### Your Doctors

Your anesthesiologist was Dr. \_\_\_\_\_.

Your surgeon is Dr. \_\_\_\_\_  
from the \_\_\_\_\_ clinic.

### When to Call

- A fever above 100°F (by mouth) or 99° F (under the arm) for 2 readings taken 4 hours apart.
- Trouble breathing or a "wet sounding" cough that won't go away.
- Frequent vomiting **after** getting settled at home (more than twice).
- Trouble urinating, or a painful, full bladder.
- Your pain does not go away or gets really bad.
- You have a bad headache that is worse when you sit up and better when you lie flat.
- New weakness or numbness.

### Who to Call

The clinic phone number is: **(608)** \_\_\_\_\_.  
Call if you have questions or concerns. Our toll-free number **1-800-323-8942 (24 hr)**.

After hours call **(608) 262-0486**. Ask for the doctor on call for Dr. \_\_\_\_\_.  
Give your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you have questions or concerns about the nerve block or get a **severe headache**, call **(608) 262-0486** and ask for the Anesthesia Acute Pain Service. If you had surgery at The American Center, ask for the Anesthesiologist on call.

A nurse will call you at home or work within the next few days. We will ask you about the care you received and how you are feeling.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#6325