



Activities of Daily Living After Lung Surgery

Sternal precautions for clamshell incision and sternotomy

To help you recover from lung surgery, we encourage you to resume your regular daily activities as you keep these guidelines in mind.

Be sure to get a good night's sleep, get dressed every day, eat healthy meals, and slowly resume the hobbies or social activities you enjoy.

Protect Your Sternum

For 12 weeks or until your health care team tells you otherwise, do **NOT**:

- Lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 10 pounds.
- Raise your elbows higher than your shoulders.
- Reach behind your back, twist your body, or bend and reach sideways.

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

To protect your sternum, follow these tips for doing your ADLs:

Getting out of bed:

		
1. Hug a pillow to your chest. Roll onto your side, with your knees bent.	2. Move your feet off the bed. Gently use your elbow to raise your body to a sitting position.	3. Sit on the side of the bed before standing up.

Getting back into bed:

1. Hug a pillow and sit far back from the edge of the bed, near the top $\frac{1}{3}$ of the bed.
2. Lie on your side.
3. Lift your legs onto the bed with your knees bent.
4. Roll onto your back. Let go of the pillow.
5. Scoot up or down using your legs (not your arms).

Questions?

Call 206-598-4830

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Occupational Therapy:
206-598-4830

5-Northeast Telemetry:
206-598-4500

Standing up from a bed, chair, and toilet:

- **Do not use your arms** to help you stand.
- **Hug a pillow and lean forward** with your nose out over your toes.
- **Use elevation** if needed, such as a pillow, foam cushion, or a raised toilet seat.

Getting dressed and personal hygiene:

- **Protect your sternum** (as described on page 1) when you put on a shirt that opens in front, T-shirt, or bra, and when you shampoo or comb your hair.
- **Do not reach behind your back** to wipe after using the toilet.
- **Do not reach behind your back** to put on a coat, robe, or shirt.

Specific Activities

For 12 weeks after surgery, or until your health care team tells you otherwise:

- **Have someone else do chores** such as vacuuming, sweeping, mopping, raking, digging, or mowing the lawn.
- **Do not drive.** It is OK to ride in the back or front seat of a car with a seat belt. On long drives, stop every hour and walk for 5 to 10 minutes.
- **Avoid lifting.** Ask someone else to lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds. This includes groceries, laundry, children, pets, and anything else.
- **Do not open** tight jar lids, stuck windows, or heavy doors. Ask someone for help.
- **Do not soak** in a bathtub or hot tub, swim, or use a sauna.
- **Do not play** golf, tennis, or softball.
- **Do not** bowl, ski, run, ride a horse, or do anything else that causes you to bend or twist your upper body.
- **Avoid vigorous swimming.**

Be Patient with Yourself

It is normal to feel frustrated, stressed, tired, or depressed after major surgery. Some people feel they are not as sharp mentally. Do not make yourself do mentally challenging tasks. Talk with your health care provider if you have these feelings or problems and they do not go away.

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