

# Lung Surgery: Returning Home

After lung surgery, you may feel tired and short of breath.

The area near the incision might feel tight or numb, or it may itch or tingle.

Your chest may also be swollen and painful.

Depending on the type of lung surgery you had, these symptoms usually go away within several weeks.

Sometimes, though, it can take longer.

After your surgery, you may have one or more tubes in your chest to help drain fluids and air.

If you do have tubes, your care team will teach you how to take care of them.

You'll also be told when you'll need to have the tubes removed.

You may also get extra oxygen through a mask or through plastic tubes in your nostrils.

Before you go home, you'll meet with the hospital staff to go over your care plan.

The plan will include information about getting back to your routine; any checkups or specialist care you might need; and who to contact if you have any concerns.

This is a great time to ask questions.

Now, here are some key things you can do to help yourself heal and avoid problems.

Follow any instructions about eating, activity, and when you can shower or bathe.

And be sure to follow any instructions for taking care of your incisions.

Take your medicines as prescribed.

Don't lift anything heavy or do any hard exercise until your doctor says it's okay.

And get plenty of rest.

Your care provider may have you do activities that help keep your lungs healthy.

These could include deep breathing and going for short walks.

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Contact your doctor if you have any problems, such as new or worse pain; increased shortness of breath; if you are sick to your stomach and can't drink fluids; if an incision comes open; or if bright red blood soaks through the bandage.

Watch for any changes in your health and contact your doctor if you cough up a lot more mucus than usual or if the mucus changes color.

Also contact your doctor if fluid leaks around the drain in your chest or if you notice an increase in fluids coming out of the drain.

While you're healing, contact your doctor if you have signs of infection like a fever; increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness; pus draining from incisions; red streaks leading from incisions; or swollen lymph nodes in your neck, armpits, or groin.

And after your surgery, don't smoke or allow others to smoke around you.

Recovery and healing take time, and everyone recovers at a different pace.

So be kind to yourself.

You can always call your care provider if you have any questions.