

## **Information About Surgical Risks**

Surgery today is generally safe and beneficial. However, surgical procedures of any type involve risks. Risks range from minor to serious and include the risk of death or debilitating conditions. It is important to be aware of possible risks before you give your consent to the operation that you are planning. The following may be the reactions of your body to surgery.

### **SWELLING AND BRUISING**

Moderate swelling and bruising are normal after any surgery. The severity and duration will vary from individual to individual.

### **DISCOMFORT AND PAIN**

Mild to moderate discomfort or pain is normal after any surgery. If the pain becomes severe and is not relieved by pain medication, please call us. The severity and duration of pain can vary by procedure and can vary from individual to individual.

### **INFECTION**

Invasion of tissue by bacteria or other germs occurs to some degree whenever a cut or incision is made. In most instances, through the natural defense mechanisms of the body, healing of the affected area occurs without difficulty. In some instances antibiotic medicines are prescribed, and at times additional surgical measures may be necessary to combat infection.

### **HEMORRHAGE**

Every surgical incision involves the cutting of blood vessels, which causes bleeding. Bleeding usually is controlled without difficulty. Bleeding beneath the skin after surgery can lead to a collection of blood beneath the skin called a "hematoma". Your pre- and post-operative instructions are designed to minimize this risk. Additional surgical procedures may be necessary to deal with any post-operative bleeding if it occurs.

Extensive blood loss during surgery is an extraordinarily rare event. In extreme cases, a blood transfusion would be required to replace excessive losses. If blood transfusions are given, there is an additional risk of an undesired liver inflammation. There is no absolutely reliable way to predict those unwanted reactions, some of which may be quite serious and can lead to death.

### **DRUG REACTIONS**

Unexpected allergies, lack of proper response to medications, or illness caused by prescribed drugs is possible. It is important for you to inform your physician of any problems you have had with reaction to drugs and to let him know which medications you now take regularly, including over-the-counter drugs, especially aspirin.

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## **ANESTHESIA REACTIONS**

You may experience unusual or unexpected responses to the gases, drugs, or methods used to anesthetize you. This may include nausea, vomiting, allergic reactions, skin rash, and itching. In very rare cases anesthesia reactions can lead to difficulties with lung, heart, or nerve function, including convulsions, coma, or death. When anesthesia or sedation is to be used, you are not allowed to eat or drink for several hours prior to surgery in order to reduce the possibility of vomiting during or after surgery.

## **BLOOD VESSEL INFLAMMATION AND CLOTTING**

When these conditions happen together, thrombophlebitis results; blood clots may separate and move into other organs and injure those organs or cause other injury.

## **INJURY TO OTHER ORGANS**

Because of the closeness of other organs to the area being operated on, it may be unavoidable that other organ functions or nerves connected to these organs or tissue will be affected. The stress of surgery may also harm other organ systems of the body. Changes in the treatment will be made by your physician in response to these conditions.

## **NEUROLOGICAL REACTIONS**

Anesthetic or surgical complications could potentially result in minor or significant neurological complications. These may be partial or complete, temporary or permanent. When incisions are made on the face or body, it is quite common to have mild and transient alterations or decreases in sensation to the areas operated upon. Some incisions result in expected areas of numbness, which may take several months to resolve. Injection of a local anesthetic near a motor nerve or pressure from surgery upon a motor nerve could cause a temporary, usually partial decrease in muscle activity in some part of the face. These conditions usually resolve within a few days or weeks, but a permanent or complete loss of sensory or motor nerve function is possible on rare occasions. Other less frequent complications are possible.

## **WOUND HEALING**

It is normal and natural for wounds to become inflamed in the first few days after surgery. This is manifested as redness and itchiness. During the next several weeks, scar tissue is laid down causing the wounds to be somewhat firm, irregular, and sometimes hypersensitive. It can take up to one full year for a scar to mature completely, becoming flat, soft, and lighter in color. Wound healing varies with each individual skin type and occasionally may take longer than usual to resolve completely. Furthermore, certain individuals can develop an excess growth of scar tissue, which is known as hypertrophic or, rarely, keloid scarring. These can usually, but not always, be treated very satisfactorily.

When skin is cut, there is compromise of the blood supply to surrounding tissues. For most patients this is of very little concern, and the tissues will heal normally. However, especially with certain procedures such as a facelift or flap development to repair facial defects, cigarette smoking and alcohol can pose significant risks to normal healing. In such situations, there could be loss of skin tissue with scarring,

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which may be improved but never completely returned to normal. All patients must cease smoking for a minimum of two weeks prior to surgery and a minimum of two weeks following surgery. Alcohol consumption should be minimized.

Any incision during the healing phase may separate or heal unusually slow for a number of reasons. These include inflammation, infection, wound tension, decreased circulation, smoking or excess external pressure. If delayed healing occurs, the final outcome is usually not significantly affected, but secondary revision of the scar may be indicated.

### **OTHER RISKS**

Medical complications such as pulmonary embolism (a blood clot affecting the lungs), severe allergic reactions to medications, cardiac arrhythmias, heart attack, and hyperthermia are extremely rare but possible serious and life-threatening problems. (Failure to disclose all pertinent medical data before surgery may cause serious problems for you and for the medical team during surgery.)

It is not possible to list here all the possible risks and complications and their variations that may arise in any surgical operation or procedure. Each situation depends on the condition of the patient's health and the purpose and nature of the operation. Even with an extremely healthy, young patient, it is possible for the most competent of surgeons and/or anesthesiologists to have complications arising from surgery. Major complications occur very rarely, but often are impossible to predict or prevent. It is important for every patient to understand that in electing to undergo surgery, these risks are being accepted. The doctor will discuss further with you any details about these and other risks, or any questions you might have about your surgery.

### **UNSATISFACTORY RESULT**

All surgery treatments and operations are performed to improve a condition, a problem, or appearance. While the procedures are performed with a very high probability of success, disappointments occur and results are not always acceptable to patients or the surgeon. Asymmetry, unhappiness with the result, poor healing, etc., all may occur. Minimal differences are usually considered acceptable. Larger differences may require revisional surgery or secondary treatments. Rarely, problems may occur that are permanent.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO TREATMENT**

You may want to consider other ways of managing the problem for which you seek surgery. Options range from doing nothing to taking different treatment measures. If you decide upon surgery, do not hesitate to discuss the reasons for the choice with the doctor. If you choose an alternative treatment, be sure to ask the doctor about the potential effectiveness and risks accompanying these alternative methods.

Because there are risks involved in any operation and it is not possible to guarantee or give assurance of a successful result, it is important that you clearly understand and agree to the planned surgery as the decision of your choice.

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I certify that I have read the foregoing information about surgical risks **PRIOR** to signing my “Informed Consent for Surgery”. I further certify that all of my questions regarding the above information have been answered by Dr. Hendrick to my complete satisfaction.

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Signed

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Date

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