You have had a **carotid endarterectomy (CEA)**. This is a surgery to remove plaque (fatty deposits) from inside your carotid artery (see Figure 1).

Plaque may build up inside your carotid artery and decrease blood flow to your brain. A piece of plaque may also break free and cause a stroke.

**Read this information to learn:**
- How to care for yourself at home
- What to expect
- Who to call if you have questions.

**Going Home After Surgery**
Ask someone to help you for the first week you are at home. You will need help to prepare your meals, do housekeeping, visit your doctor and do other everyday activities. Typically, we will discharge you from the Inpatient Surgery Unit about 1 or 2 days following your surgery.

**What can I expect on the day I leave the hospital?**

**Discharge time is 11:00 a.m.**
Talk to your nurse or doctor if you have any questions. We may give you prescriptions for medicines at the time of discharge.
What symptoms might I have after surgery?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPTOM</th>
<th>WHAT TO DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PAIN:  As you become more active, you may feel some pain. | • Take pain medicines as needed.  
• You may use over-the-counter Tylenol® Extra-Strength (acetaminophen) or Advil® (ibuprofen) for pain relief.  
• We may give you a prescription for pain medicine at the time of discharge. Do not operate a motor vehicle for 24 hours or while on pain medicine as it may make you less alert. |
| CONSTIPATION: Constipation is common when taking prescription pain medicines and being less active. | • Drink plenty of fluids, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.  
• If you have no dietary requirements, eat foods high in fibre, such as bran breads and cereals, berries, dried fruit, or prune juice.  
• If needed, take a mild laxative.  
• If the issue persists, visit your family doctor. |
| FEELING TIRED, TROUBLE SLEEPING: You may feel tired after surgery. This is normal and may last several days. | • Take a nap every day. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day.  
• Increase your activity as you recover. |
| EMOTIONS: You may feel frustrated or discouraged for several days or weeks after surgery. These feelings are normal. As you recover and regain your strength, this should improve. | • Take one day at a time. Give yourself enough time to recover.  
• If these feelings persist, visit your family doctor. |

Go to the nearest Emergency Department and/or call your surgeon if you have:

• Symptoms of a stroke (sudden vision loss, difficulty speaking, weakness or numbness of an arm or leg, loss of consciousness)
• Headache
• Difficulty swallowing
• Bleeding or drainage (pus) from the wound (incision site), or
• Redness or swelling around the wound that was not there before.
### How do I take care of myself at home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>WHAT TO DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **WOUND CARE** | - Keep your surgical wound (incision site) dry for 24 hours after surgery. After 24 hours, you may shower using mild soap. Pat the wound dry with a towel. This is all you need to clean your wound. Do not apply lotions or creams on the wound until it is completely healed.  
- The steri-strips (little white tape) may start to peel off. You can remove them 7 to 10 days after surgery. |
| **ACTIVITY** | - You may gradually perform more of your usual daily activities. Walk as much as your body will tolerate.  
- Do not lift more than 10 pounds (5 kilograms) for the next month. An example would be a bag of groceries. Lifting more than 10 pounds may stress or disrupt the wound. |
| **RETURN TO WORK** | - **You will be off work for at least 2 weeks.** This will depend on the type of work you do. Ask your doctor when it is safe for you to return to work. |

### How do I take care of myself in the long-term to prevent carotid artery disease?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>WHAT TO DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMOKING CESSATION:</strong> Smoking raises the risk carotid artery disease and stroke.</td>
<td>- If you smoke, ask your family doctor about programs and/or medicines that can help you quit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR’S PLAN</strong> for treating high blood pressure and high cholesterol.</td>
<td>- Continue to take Aspirin® (acetylsalicylic acid/ASA) and/or Plavix® (clopidogrel), as prescribed. This will help prevent plaque from building up in the carotid arteries, and reduce your risk of stroke.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Follow-up Appointments

☐ APPOINTMENT WITH FAMILY DOCTOR: Contact your family doctor for a follow-up appointment **within 1 week of your surgery.** At this visit, your doctor will review medicine changes and manage any symptoms.

My follow-up appointment with my family doctor is on ______________________ at __________

☐ APPOINTMENT WITH SURGEON: Contact your surgeon’s office for a follow-up appointment **within 2 to 3 weeks of your surgery.**

My follow-up appointment with my surgeon is on ______________________ at __________

Who do I call for more information?

If you have any further questions or you would like to book your 2-week follow-up appointment with your surgeon, please call:

Vascular Surgery office
Dr. K. Graybiel  Dr. A. Beder  Dr. L. Figueroa  Dr. A. Saleh

Tel: (416) 742-2961

Adapted from the pamphlet, “After your Carotid Endarterectomy”, with permission from the University Health Network Patient and Caregiver Education Program.

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The information provided in this booklet is for educational purposes. It does not replace the advice or specific instructions from your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat. If you have questions about your own care, please speak with your healthcare provider.

**English:** This information is important! If you have trouble reading this, ask someone to help you.  **Italian:** Queste informazioni sono importanti! Se ha difficoltà a leggere questo, chieda aiuto a qualcuno.  **Spanish:** ¡Esta información es importante! Si tiene dificultad en leer esto, pida que alguien le ayude.