



YOUR POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENT IS SCHEDULED FOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
(it is essential to keep your post-op appointment, if this date and time does not work,  
please call our office to reschedule. (617) 524-3864

**Post Operative Instructions  
Zenker's Diverticulum**

**DIET**

- You will likely be eating a soft diet before your discharge from the hospital. Continue a soft diet and avoid spicy foods for one week. You may then resume a normal diet as tolerated.

**PAIN**

- You may have a mild sore throat, and can extra strength Tylenol or a mild narcotic as needed.
- Mild pain with swallowing or difficulty swallowing may occur, and should improve within a week.

**ACTIVITY**

- Abstain from heavy lifting (more than 10 lbs) or strenuous activity and exercise for one week. You may return to your normal activities as tolerated one week after surgery.
- It is important to avoid vocal strain. This means not raising your voice, no whispering and avoid throat clearing. Whispering can be just as strenuous as raising your voice, and adds to the swelling of the vocal cords. The same is true for clearing your throat, as this increases swelling.

**WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR**

- Although very rare, if you experience fever (usually noted as  $> 101.5$ ), racing heart, back or chest pain, this could be a sign of a complication of surgery that we would want to know about immediately.

Should you have any questions or problems following your procedure which have not been covered in this information sheet, please feel free to call the office between the hours of 9am and 5pm and we will be happy to answer your questions.

Some important information about narcotic medications:

### NARCOTICS (OPIOIDS)

Frequently after surgery you may be prescribed a narcotic pain medication, also known as opioid medications. Tylenol #3 (Tylenol [or acetaminophen] with codeine), Vicodin (Tylenol with hydrocodone), and Percocet (or its liquid form, Roxicet which are Tylenol and oxycodone) are commonly given for procedures where pain may not be easily controlled with Tylenol alone. As these above listed pain medications include acetaminophen (Tylenol) as well, it is notable that you should not be taking additional Tylenol on top of these medications. (Acetaminophen not to exceed 3000 mg daily for adults or 10 mg/kg per 4 hours in children, 15 mg/kg per 6 hours in children).

Common side effects of narcotics include:

- Sedation- because these medications can make you drowsy, do not operate heavy machinery nor drive while taking them. Also, do not make important decisions after anesthesia nor while on these medications.
- Nausea- try to take a little bit of food (even a tablespoon or two of applesauce; something simple) before the narcotic, to prevent nausea. Also, use the least amount that is effective to avoid additional adverse side effects. If taking the narcotic you are still very nauseous or vomiting, call the office to obtain anti-nausea medication or to be switched to a different pain medication.
- Constipation- for some people, narcotics can cause significant constipation. Taking an over the counter stool softener, such as Colace or Dulcolax can be helpful in preventing this, or consider adjusting your diet (e.g. adding prunes/juice/fiber) while taking them to avoid/alleviate this problem. Call the office if this is a problem despite these suggestions.
- Itchiness- unless you have a rash (which would indicate potential allergic reaction) this is seen in association with a histamine release noted by some patients when taking narcotics. An antihistamine such as Claritin (loratadine), Zyrtec (ceterizine) or Benadryl can generally alleviate this.

When taken as prescribed, narcotic pain medications can manage pain safely and effectively. But taking medication that is not prescribed for you, taking more pills than have been prescribed, taking too many prescription narcotics at once, or taking them in ways other than prescribed can have short-term and long-term harmful effects on the brain and body, including serious medical complications, addiction, brain damage, overdose and death.

Disposal of Unused Prescription Drugs:

- Bring unused medications to secure medication drop-off boxes around the state. To find a drop box in your area, visit [www.mass.gov/DrugDropbox](http://www.mass.gov/DrugDropbox)
- Do not flush medication down the drain unless the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs you to do so
- If you throw medication in the garbage, remove the medicine from its container, crush the pills and mix them with coffee grounds or kitty litter. Place the mixture in an unmarked container, like an empty can or sealable bag, and throw the container in the trash.