INFORMATION FROM THE PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Once you have had your operation your own efforts are of prime importance.

Your lung capacity and blood circulation will be reduced for a period. In order to avoid complications such as pneumonia and thrombosis (blood clots forming), it is important that you commence as soon as possible with:

- Deep, regular and relaxed breathing exercises. Try to relax your shoulders.
- Do your leg exercises
- Use the PEP exhalation tube
- Cough up/ sharply exhale and expectorate any mucus from your lungs.

It may feel uncomfortable and painful to take deep breaths after your operation due to the surgical wound. It is however important that you don't let this stop you from breathing in a relaxed and easy manner. Don't be afraid to ask for additional pain relief medication when it hurts.

EXERCISES TO IMPROVE YOUR CIRCULATION:

You can carry out these exercises lying down, and can start immediately after the operation

- Bend and stretch your ankle

- Drawn your knee up to your stomach and stretch out again. Do this in turn, right and the left leg.

- Tighten and relax your buttock muscles
BREATHING EXERCISES TO AVOID COMPLICATIONS WITH YOUR LUNGS

- The PEP exhalation tube shall be used every hour you are awake from morning to night as long as you are here in the clinic, at your local hospital and at home while you still feel short of breath and/or are still experiencing mucus/fluids in your airways.
- Breathe in deeply and evenly, then blow out through the tube. The aim is 10 breaths by x 3 each time.
- Cough or sharply exhale after every tenth breath.

GOOD INFORMATION TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU

After your discharge from hospital your own efforts are vital to get you back into good shape. Assume responsibility for your own health and training.

- Start by going for walks.
- Take several short rather than one long walk.
- Start of in relatively flat terrain.
- As you get fitter you can progress to hillier terrain and increase your pace and the distance you walk.

Weeks 1-4.
Do not over-exercise or over exert yourself

Weeks 5-8.
Increased level of activity and load, so that training in weeks 7 and 8 is relatively tiring. You should be tired and breathless to the degree that you can only answer in short sentences.

Do not start cycling, swimming and similar activities until your breastbone has mended.

It is important to return to a normal daily routine as soon as possible. You will no doubt have good days and bad days, and you will get tired more quickly than before. For all these reasons it is important to find a good balance between activity and rest.

It will take about 8 weeks for your breastbone to grow properly together and heal. In order to ensure that this process functions as it should, there are certain activities you must avoid during this period. Avoid heavy physical tasks that place an undue load on the arms, such as vacuuming, cleaning floors, shovelling snow, mowing the lawn and similar. You can engage in lighter activities such as handcrafts, drawing, cooking, dusting and so forth.
Exercise 5:
Place your hands behind your neck (or on your cheeks). Bring your elbows together in front of your face, then back again to the side. Feel that you are pushing your shoulder blades together. Breathe in when you move your arms backwards and out again when you move them forward.

Exercise 6:
Place your hands behind your neck. Starting the motion with your lower back, rotate your torso to the right. You should be able to see your elbow. Repeat to the left.

Exercise 7:
Stretch your arms fully out to your sides. Bring your arms together over your head with a vertical movement while breathing in. Bring your arms down again while breathing out.

Exercise 8: “Skiing” exercise
Swing your arms loosely backwards and forwards alongside your torso while performing slight and easy knee bends.

Exercise 9:
Swing your arms lightly from side to side while rotating your torso/back, watch where your arms are going.

Chest and arm exercises

Exercise 1:
Let your arms hang down freely and relaxed. Breathe in deeply and slowly while drawing your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe out and return your shoulders to the normal position.

Exercise 2:
Gather your hands in front of your body. Swing your arms above your head while taking a deep breath. Swing your arms back down again while breathing out.

Exercise 3:
Place your fingertips on your shoulders. Make circular motions with your arms. Breathe in slowly on the up turn and breathe out slowly on the downturn.

Exercise 4:
Alternate between clasping your hands behind your neck and behind your back.
Leg exercises

Exercise 1: Knee bends
Stand with your legs slightly apart. Bend your knees and return to an upright position in one fluid motion. Try to get as far down as possible, as if you were about to sit down.

Exercise 2: Standing on your toes
Stand with your legs slightly apart. Stretch up as far as possible on your toes. Lower yourself slowly.

Exercise 3: Forward torso bend
Place one foot in front of you. Move your torso forwards so that you bend your knee and take the weight on the forward leg. Move back to the upright position and gather your legs together again. Repeat with the opposite leg.

Exercise 4: Body weight transfer, side to side
Stand with your feet slightly apart and move your torso from side to side/foot to foot.

Exercises in bed

Pelvis lift:
Lie flat on your back. Drawn your legs up with your feet flat on the bed. Press your feet downwards and lift your pelvis. Count to 5 and sink slowly down again.

Exercises while sitting on a chair or stool

Sit normally with a straight back. Lift up your leg so that your knee is fully stretched out. Count to five and slowly replace your foot on the floor.