

*Greenwich Hospital*

**What is a Thoracotomy/Lobectomy?**

**PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET**

**What is a thoracotomy?**

A thoracotomy is surgery to open your chest wall. A thoracotomy may be done due to lung diseases/conditions or trauma.

**What is a lobectomy?**

A lobectomy is a surgical procedure to remove one or more lobes of the lung. The surgeon may also remove lymph nodes at the same time.

**How do I care for myself after a thoracotomy or lobectomy?**

Care after a thoracotomy or lobectomy includes paying close attention to the following:

1. **Activity:** Limit physical activity for the first two weeks after surgery to allow your body to rest and heal. Consult with your surgeon before resuming your normal activity level.

Keep in mind the following recommendations:

- No heavy lifting (do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds, for example two gallons of milk).
  - No driving. Limit long car rides
  - No strenuous exercise, limit stair climbing.
2. **Diet:** You may return to your normal diet.
  3. **Hygiene:** Check with your surgeon regarding showering.
  4. **Incision/ dressing care:** Keep incision site clean and dry.
  5. **Medication:** You should resume your pre-surgery medication unless told differently by your surgeon and/or primary care doctor. Take all medications as prescribed after surgery, which may include pain medication and/or antibiotics. If you are taking medicine that makes you drowsy, do not drive or use heavy machinery.

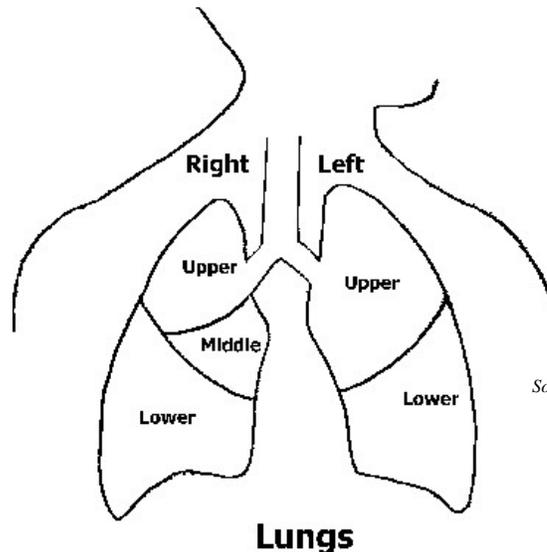
## What do I need to report to my physician?

Report the following problems to your surgeon:

1. Fever above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Severe pain or increase in pain.
3. Redness, swelling, or drainage at incision site. This may be a sign of infection.
4. Blood or other drainage soaking through the bandage.
5. Sudden difficulty breathing. This could be a sign that you have a blood clot in your lung.

## What do I need to do for follow-up?

1. Take your medications as prescribed (see discharge instruction form).
2. Call your surgeon, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ to schedule a follow-up visit when you get home. Generally your surgeon would like to see you one week after your surgery to monitor your progress and to remove your staples.
3. Call your surgeon if you have any questions or concerns about your surgery or medications.



Source [www.siumed.edu](http://www.siumed.edu)

*For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at [www.greenhosp.org](http://www.greenhosp.org) and Click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education*