

A MESSAGE TO PATIENTS ABOUT MEDICAL/SURGICAL RISKS

Medicine and surgery are generally safe, helpful and often lifesaving. However, medical or surgical procedures of any type involve the taking of risks, ranging from minor to serious (including the risk of death.) It is important to be aware of the following possible risks before receiving the treatment you and your physician are planning. The following may be the reactions of your body to medical/surgical operations or procedures:

1. INFECTION: Invasion of tissue by bacteria or any other germs occurs to some degree whenever a cut, incision or puncture 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.

2. HEMORRAGE: The cutting of blood vessels causes bleeding and this occurs in every surgical incision. The bleeding is usually controlled without difficulty. At times, blood transfusions are required to replace blood loss. If blood transfusions are given, there are additional risks of liver inflammation, hepatitis, and the possibility of receiving Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). There is no absolutely reliable way to predict these unwanted reactions, some of which may be quite serious and even lead to death.

3. DRUG REACTIONS: Unexpected allergies, lack of proper response to medications or illness caused by the prescribed drugs are possibilities. It is important for you to inform your physician and your anesthesiologist or certified registered nurse anesthetist of any problem you or your family have had with reactions to drugs and which medications you have taken in the past six months, including over-the-counter drugs, **especially** aspirin.

4. ANESTHESIA REACTIONS: There may be unusual or unexpected responses to the gases, drugs or methods used to anesthetize you which can lead to difficulties with lung, heart, or nerve function. Eating or drinking before anesthesia increase the risk of vomiting which may cause significant complications. Inform your anesthesiologist or certified nurse anesthetist of problems you and your family have had to anesthesia.

5. BLOOD VESSEL INFLAMMATION AND BLOOD CLOTTING: It is impossible to predict the occurrence of blood vessel inflammation and clotting problems. If blood clots form, they can move from where they formed to other areas of the body and cause injury.

6. INJURY TO OTHER ORGANS: Because of the closeness of other organs to the area being operated on, there may be injury to other organs. The stress of surgery or the procedure may also harm other organ systems of the body.

7. OTHER RISKS: It is not possible to list all the possible risks and complications, and their variations that may arise in any surgical operation or medical procedure. Each situation depends upon the purpose and nature of the operation or procedures. Your physician is willing to discuss further you various details about the risks.

ALTERNATIVES TO TREATMENT

Although you and your doctor have decided upon this procedure, do not hesitate to discuss the reasons for the choice and the alternatives available for treatment of your condition, in addition, be sure to ask your doctor any other questions that you may have about your treatment.