

Thoracotomy Pathway (Age 13 and Over)

These are goals for your recovery. Your experience may not follow this pathway exactly. Your doctor or nurse will tell you what to expect. Read the resource *About Your Thoracotomy for Pediatric Patients* for more information.

	Day of Surgery	1 Day After Surgery
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit in your chair for 30 minutes or longer. • Do your self-care activities while you're in bed. For example, brush your teeth or wash your face in bed. • Use your incentive spirometer, pinwheel, or blow bubbles 10 or more times each hour you're awake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get out of bed 3 times today. Stay out of bed for 1 or more hour each time. • Walk outside of your room 3 or more times today. • Do your self-care activities sitting at the edge of your bed. • Sit in your chair while you eat. • Use your incentive spirometer, pinwheel, or blow bubbles 10 or more times each hour you're awake.
What procedures will I have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will have a chest x-ray in your room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your urinary catheter might be taken out.
What medications will I take?	<p>You will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain medicine through your epidural PCA, peripheral nerve catheter, or IV PCA. • Extra pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), if you need it. • Medicine to keep your stomach from getting upset (nauseous). 	<p>You will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain medicine through your epidural PCA, peripheral nerve catheter, or IV PCA. • Extra pain medicine (such as Tylenol), if you need it. • Medicine to keep your stomach from getting upset, if you need it. • Medicine to help you go to the bathroom.
What will I do so my lung gets stronger?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every day, you will have chest physical therapy every 4 hours. • You will have physical therapy and occupational therapy. A physical therapist or occupational therapist will visit you after your surgery. They will talk with you about how often you will have physical and occupational therapy. 	

Your doctor and nurses will check your chest tube every day. They will take it out when the amount of liquid coming out of it is low enough. This might happen soon after your surgery, or it might be a few days after.

You will start getting a different kind of pain medicine that you swallow (oral pain medicine) after your chest tube is taken out. If you have an epidural or peripheral nerve catheter for your pain medicine, your doctor will take it out soon after they take out your chest tube.

	2 Days After Surgery	3 Days After Surgery
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be out of bed for half of the time you're awake. • Walk 1 full lap around the nursing unit. Do this 3 or more times today. • Do your self-care activities standing at the sink. • Sit in your chair while you eat. • Use your incentive spirometer, pinwheel, or blow bubbles 10 or more times each hour you're awake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be out of bed for most of the time you're awake. • Walk 2 to 3 full laps around the nursing unit. Do this 3 or more times today. • Do your self-care activities standing at the sink. • Sit in your chair while you eat. • Change into new clothes. Ask for help, if you need it. • Use your incentive spirometer, pinwheel, or blow bubbles 10 or more times each hour you're awake.
What procedures will I have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you still have a urinary catheter, it will be taken out. 	
What medications will I take?	<p>You will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain medicine. • Extra pain medicine (such as Tylenol), if you need it. • Medicine to help you go to the bathroom. 	<p>You will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain medicine. • Extra pain medicine (such as Tylenol), if you need it. • Medicine to help you go to the bathroom.
What will I do so my lung gets stronger?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every day, you will have chest physical therapy every 4 hours. • You will have physical therapy and occupational therapy. A physical therapist or occupational therapist will visit you after your surgery. They will talk with you about how often you will have physical and occupational therapy. 	

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	4 Days After Surgery	5 Days After Surgery
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be out of bed for almost all of the time you're awake. • Walk 10 or more full laps around the nursing unit today. • Do your self-care activities standing at the sink. • Sit in your chair while you eat. • Change into new clothes by yourself. • Use your incentive spirometer, pinwheel, or blow bubbles 10 or more times each hour you're awake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be out of bed for almost all of the time you're awake. • Walk 10 or more full laps around the nursing unit today. • Do your self-care activities standing at the sink. • Sit in your chair while you eat. • Change into new clothes by yourself. • Use your incentive spirometer, pinwheel, or blow bubbles 10 or more times each hour you're awake.
What procedures will I have?		
What pain medicine will I take?	<p>You will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain medicine, if you need it. 	<p>You will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain medicine, if you need it.
What will I do so my lung gets stronger?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every day, you will have chest physical therapy every 4 hours. • You will have physical therapy and occupational therapy. A physical therapist or occupational therapist will visit you after your surgery. They will talk with you about how often you will have physical and occupational therapy. 	

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