POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS UNDERGOING Pilonidal Cleft Lift Surgery

1. You can expect some pain and swelling in the area of your incision. This is normal and will go away with time. You may notice a firm ridge developing under the incision in the next few weeks. This is called a healing ridge and is a normal part of the healing process.

2. Please remove any gauze dressing the day following the surgery and shower (even if you have a drain). There are white fibrous pieces of tape crossing your incision; these are called Steri-Strips. Leave Steri-Strips in place as they support your incision. Blot your incision dry after showering. Use a hair dryer on a low temperature setting to ensure that your wound is dry. Do not keep any gauze on the wound while showering.

3. Change gauze pad at least 2-3 times a day. Place gauze over the wound once the area is dry and hold it in place with the supplied mesh underwear or briefs (no tape please, it can damage your skin). Keep gauze over the wound and drain site to absorb any fluid and protect your clothing. Don’t worry if some fluid seeps directly through the incision.

4. A ‘passive’ drain was placed at the time of surgery. It looks like 1 or 2 rubber bands threaded through 2 holes in the skin flap. The rubber bands keep the holes from closing and permits fluid that accumulates under the skin flap to drain. Twice a day, have someone apply gentle pressure on the skin between the skin exit sites to encourage the drainage of fluid from under the flap. Rolling knuckles in a rolling pin motion or rolling a cigar-shaped piece of gauze works well. Roll in both directions to encourage fluid from each of the openings. The fluid will appear bloody for the first few days – this is normal. The amount of drainage will decrease over the course of the week. Have your helper gently rotate the rubber drain (it’s circular) so that the skin holes don’t close and fluid continues to drain.

5. For the first 2 weeks after surgery, please clean yourself carefully with baby wipes or Balneol (an over the counter perianal cleansing lotion) after every bowel movement, shower and dry as described above (#2).

6. Activity: Take it easy for the next several days. Sitting (even on the incision) and walking are encouraged. Please wait until after your drain is removed before engaging in vigorous exercise. Avoid sit-ups and activities that place pressure on your incision for several weeks (no bike or motorcycle riding).

7. Do not drive, operate machinery, or make important decisions the day of your surgery.

8. Make an appointment to see Dr. Sternberg for your first postoperative appointment in 8-9 days to have your drain removed.

9. Symptoms to report:
   - Temperature over 100° Fahrenheit
   - Persistent nausea or vomiting
   - Bleeding not controlled by applying steady pressure to the area for 20 minutes
   - Extreme pain not relieved by prescribed medication
   - Inability to urinate for 8 hours after surgery or passing very small frequent amounts of urine

IF YOU REQUIRE IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION AND ARE UNABLE TO CONTACT DR. STERNBERG, PLEASE GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM AT CALIFORNIA PACIFIC MEDICAL CENTER AT SACRAMENTO AND BUCHANAN STREET OR YOUR NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM.

If you have any questions, please call our offices at 415-668-0411 or 415-923-3020 during our office hours.

These instructions have been discussed with and given to the patient and/or the patient’s representative.