

Postoperative Care | Part 2

VHSI RENR PREP

Nursing Skills and Procedures Review

Cardiac, respiratory & chest procedures

Prioritise airway, breathing and circulation. Monitor oxygenation, sedation, pain and drainage trends. Follow the specific operation and chest-drain orders.

Procedure & purpose	Expected findings & nursing focus	Escalate: warning signs / risks
Coronary bypass (CABG) Vessel grafts route blood around blocked coronary arteries.	Incision pain and fatigue; drains early on. Monitor rhythm, perfusion and respiratory recovery.	New chest pain, arrhythmia, hypotension or abnormal bleeding: ischaemia, tamponade or haemorrhage.
Valve repair / replacement Diseased heart valve repaired or replaced.	Monitor rhythm, perfusion and fluid balance. Teach the valve-specific anticoagulation and follow-up plan.	Breathlessness, hypotension, neurological deficit or fever: dysfunction, embolism or infection.
Pacemaker insertion Implanted device supplies electrical impulses for selected rhythm disorders.	Mild pocket soreness/bruising. Monitor rhythm and wound; follow device-specific arm/activity advice.	Syncope, symptomatic slow pulse, breathlessness or expanding pocket swelling: pacing problem, pneumothorax or haematoma.
Tracheostomy Opening into the trachea provides an airway.	Secretions require humidification and prescribed suction/care. Keep emergency equipment available; monitor patency.	Distress, falling oxygen saturation, inability to pass suction catheter, displacement or bleeding: activate airway emergency response.
Lobectomy / pneumonectomy One lung lobe / an entire lung is removed.	Support analgesia, breathing exercises and mobilisation. Pneumonectomy positioning and drain management require specific surgical orders.	Increasing dyspnoea, hypotension or major drainage change: bleeding, respiratory failure or bronchopleural complication.
VATS Video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery uses small chest incisions; the operation performed varies.	Incision discomfort; chest drain may be present. Monitor air leak, drainage and breathing.	New dyspnoea, enlarging subcutaneous emphysema or excessive blood loss: air leak, pneumothorax or bleeding.
Pleurodesis Pleural layers are made to adhere to reduce recurrent air/fluid collection.	Chest discomfort; brief fever may occur. Provide prescribed analgesia and drain monitoring.	Worsening breathlessness, persistent fever or purulent drainage: respiratory complication or infection.
Pleural decortication Restricting fibrous pleural tissue removed to allow lung expansion, often for empyema.	Chest drains and pain control; support lung expansion and prescribed antimicrobial treatment.	Increasing respiratory distress, heavy bleeding, persistent fever or air leak: haemorrhage, infection or leak.
Chest-tube insertion Tube drains pleural air, blood, pus or other fluid.	Keep system below chest and tubing unobstructed. Record output; interpret bubbling/tidaling by chamber and context.	Distress with stopped drainage, sudden bloody increase or dislodgement: urgent review. Do not routinely clamp or strip.

For every procedure: monitor airway, breathing, circulation, consciousness, pain, wound and fluid balance. Escalate deterioration immediately; follow local protocols and individual surgical orders. These are revision summaries, not complete care plans.

Sources (click by procedure): CABG | Valve surgery | Pacemaker | Tracheostomy | Lung resection | VATS | Pleurodesis | Thoracic surgery | Chest drains

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Urological surgery & anterior eye surgery

Track true urine output, not irrigation return alone. After eye surgery, severe pain or rapidly worsening vision is an emergency, not routine discomfort.

Procedure & purpose	Expected findings & nursing focus	Escalate: warning signs / risks
Nephrectomy Part or all of a kidney removed.	Flank/incision pain. Monitor urine, creatinine, haemodynamics and fluid balance; individualise fluids.	Low urine, worsening renal tests, hypotension or heavy bleeding: renal impairment or haemorrhage.
TURP Transurethral resection removes obstructing prostate tissue through the urethra.	Blood-tinged urine; irrigation if ordered. Check catheter flow; subtract irrigation input from total drainage.	Clots, painful distension or absent drainage: obstruction. Heavy bleeding or confusion: haemorrhage/fluid-electrolyte disturbance.
Radical prostatectomy Prostate and nearby tissues removed to treat cancer.	Catheter and mild blood-stained urine may occur. Maintain drainage; removal follows the surgical plan.	Blocked catheter, clots, worsening pain or fever: retention, bleeding or infection. Later continence/sexual support may be needed.
Cystectomy with diversion Bladder removed; urine redirected through a conduit or reconstructed reservoir.	Monitor diversion output. Ileal-conduit stoma is moist; bowel-derived mucus is expected. Teach appliance care.	Low output, dark stoma, fever or abdominal deterioration: obstruction, ischaemia, leak or infection.
Shockwave lithotripsy (ESWL) External shockwaves fragment urinary stones without an incision.	Transient blood-stained urine and fragment-related discomfort. Follow fluid and urine-straining instructions.	Fever/rigors, uncontrolled pain, persistent bleeding or reduced urine: infection, obstruction or renal injury.
Ureteric stent insertion Internal tube maintains drainage from kidney to bladder.	Frequency, urgency, mild haematuria or flank discomfort may occur. Confirm planned removal/exchange.	Fever, severe pain, inability to void or reduced urine: infection, obstruction or migration.
Kidney transplant Donor kidney implanted to replace lost renal function.	Urine and creatinine trends vary; delayed graft function is possible. Monitor fluids and administer immunosuppression precisely.	Sudden low urine, graft pain, fever or rising creatinine: urgent transplant review for perfusion, rejection or infection.
Cataract extraction Cloudy lens removed, usually replaced with an artificial lens.	Grittiness, watering and initially blurred vision. Give prescribed drops; protect eye from rubbing.	Severe pain, rapidly worsening vision, increasing redness or discharge: urgent eye review for infection/pressure complications.
Trabeculectomy New aqueous-fluid drainage pathway lowers eye pressure in glaucoma.	Temporary blurring/watering. Give prescribed drops; protect eye and attend close pressure checks.	Severe pain, sudden visual decline or increasing redness: infection, bleeding or abnormal eye pressure.

For every procedure: monitor airway, breathing, circulation, consciousness, pain, wound and fluid balance. Escalate deterioration immediately; follow local protocols and individual surgical orders. These are revision summaries, not complete care plans.

Sources (click by procedure): [Nephrectomy](#) | [TURP](#) | [Prostatectomy](#) | [Ileal conduit](#) | [Lithotripsy](#) | [Ureteric stent](#) | [Kidney transplant](#) | [Cataract](#) | [Glaucoma surgery](#)

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Gynaecological, obstetric, retinal & ENT care

Distinguish light spotting from heavy bleeding. Lochia is postpartum discharge, not the correct term for bleeding after hysterectomy or myomectomy.

Procedure & purpose	Expected findings & nursing focus	Escalate: warning signs / risks
Hysterectomy Uterus removed; ovaries may be retained or removed separately.	Incision/pelvic discomfort and light vaginal bleeding/discharge may occur. Monitor bladder/bowel recovery and mobility.	Heavy bleeding/clots, foul discharge, fever or increasing pain: haemorrhage, infection or organ injury.
Myomectomy Uterine fibroids removed while retaining the uterus.	Incision discomfort and light vaginal bleeding may occur. Monitor bleeding and support prescribed activity.	Heavy bleeding, increasing pain, fever or distension: haemorrhage or infection; future pregnancy advice is individualised.
Caesarean section Baby delivered through abdominal and uterine incisions.	Incisional pain and postpartum lochia. Monitor fundal tone, bleeding, wound, urine and clot prevention; support feeding.	Heavy bleeding with a boggy uterus, fever, wound pus or breathlessness: haemorrhage, infection or embolism.
Ectopic pregnancy surgery Ectopic tissue removed, often with the affected fallopian tube.	Pain should improve; light bleeding may occur. Provide emotional support and prescribed pregnancy-hormone follow-up.	Increasing pain, dizziness, collapse or heavy bleeding: internal haemorrhage; persistent tissue risk after tube-preserving surgery.
Oophorectomy One/both ovaries removed; salpingo-oophorectomy also removes the tube(s).	Incision discomfort. Bilateral removal before menopause causes surgical menopause; discuss prescribed follow-up.	Increasing pain, distension, fever or heavy bleeding: haemorrhage, infection or visceral injury.
Retinal repair Vitrectomy and/or scleral buckle reattaches or supports the retina.	Blurred vision and mild discomfort. Follow exact posturing orders. While intraocular gas remains: no flying or nitrous oxide.	Sudden vision loss, severe pain or new curtain/flashes: redetachment, raised pressure or bleeding.
Tonsillectomy Tonsils removed for obstruction or recurrent disease.	Throat/ear pain can be significant. Maintain prescribed analgesia and hydration; observe swallowing.	Fresh bleeding, blood vomiting or frequent swallowing: possible haemorrhage. Breathing difficulty: airway emergency.
Endoscopic sinus surgery Sinus drainage pathways opened through the nose.	Congestion and small blood-stained discharge. Follow nasal-care instructions; avoid nose blowing until cleared.	Heavy bleeding, visual change, severe headache or clear persistent drainage: haemorrhage, orbital injury or CSF leak.
Tympanoplasty Eardrum, sometimes middle-ear structures, repaired.	Packing may temporarily reduce hearing; mild discomfort. Keep ear dry and follow pressure/activity precautions.	New facial weakness, severe vertigo, heavy bleeding or purulent drainage: nerve injury, infection or repair complication.

For every procedure: monitor airway, breathing, circulation, consciousness, pain, wound and fluid balance. Escalate deterioration immediately; follow local protocols and individual surgical orders. These are revision summaries, not complete care plans.

Sources (click by procedure): [Hysterectomy](#) | [Myomectomy](#) | [Caesarean](#) | [Ectopic surgery](#) | [Gynaecological surgery](#) | [Retinal repair](#) | [Tonsillectomy](#) | [Sinus surgery](#) | [Tympanoplasty](#)