



## Post-Operative Instructions

You are ready for discharge. Here are instructions for caring for your incision(s) and taking care of yourself after surgery.

### Incision

I will usually close your incision with dissolvable sutures. This means there are no stitches to remove. Your incision is covered by either surgical glue or steri-strips.

#### Surgical Glue

If you have surgical glue, you may shower immediately after surgery as the glue is water proof.

#### Steri-Strips

If you have steri-strips (small white tapes) you must wait 48 hours after surgery before showering. Do not swim or bathe for 7 days as this will cause the tapes to soften and come off sooner. The steri-strips will begin to fray on the edges and when one side has completely frayed you may remove them. If they have not frayed much over your recovery, you may remove them 10 days after surgery.

Look for redness, drainage of creamy material or increased swelling and soreness around your incisions. If this develops, call the office and we will arrange to see you to examine the incisions. Often there will be some bruising around the incision. It will look light pink to red over the first 2-3 days after surgery and then it will change to a bruised (yellowish/purple) appearance. This is normal.

### Medication

You will be given different types of pain medicine. You will be given prescriptions for these medicines at the time of discharge. Take them as directed.

#### Ibuprofen (Motrin):

- Use the ibuprofen first and regularly and try to limit the narcotic use for times of increased pain or at night.
- If you have problems with stomach ulcers or “reflux” problems, I may also prescribe a medicine to prevent an upset stomach while taking ibuprofen.

#### Narcotics (Lortab, Vicodin, Darvocet or Tylenol #3):

- These medicines sometimes cause nausea and vomiting.
- If you have nausea, try taking the narcotic with a small meal to reduce stomach upset.
- You may not drive, drink alcohol, or operate heavy machinery while taking this medicine as it will make you tired and reduce your judgment and reaction time.

If you have trouble with regular bowel movements, every morning, you will need to take 30 grams of dietary fiber (FiberCon, Metamucil, Benefiber or equivalent). Make sure you drink 2-3 liters of fluid a day while taking fiber. This medicine may be purchased without a prescription at your local supermarket or pharmacy.

## **Diet**

It is normal for your appetite to be decreased after surgery. Do not force yourself to eat because it may cause nausea and vomiting which may cause pain due to the abdominal incisions. Eat what you like but eat smaller meals more frequently. Try to limit your meals to lean meats, vegetables and starches. Avoid foods that are known to cause you increased abdominal gas because bloating will be more uncomfortable after surgery.

Drinking plenty of fluids is more important than resuming a normal diet. I recommend drinking 2-3 liters of low or no calorie beverages. Caffeine is OK to drink in moderation but avoid carbonated beverages because these can also cause increased abdominal gas and bloating.

## **Activity**

- Do not drive until you receive clearance (will discuss during your post-op appointment).
- Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds.
- Do not participate in high impact exercise or swim during the first week after surgery.
- A good rule of thumb is “If it hurts your abdomen or incisions, DON’T DO IT!”. The exception is walking and rising from a chair or bed. While this may hurt, it is necessary that you move around frequently during the day.
- Take long, slow, deep breaths and cough even if it causes abdominal discomfort. It is critical for keeping your lungs clear.

At your post-operative appointment, we will discuss what activities you may begin to do. The reason for limiting activity is that we do not want you to put stress on your abdominal incisions while they are healing.

## **Warnings**

While your body is healing you will experience different sensations, cramps, or discomforts. Most of these are perfectly normal.

Call the Office at **(940) 383-2424** if you have any of the following:

- Fever > 100.5 degrees
- Difficulty breathing
- Racing heartbeat
- Asymmetric leg swelling
- Nausea or vomiting that lasts > 24 hours
- Decreased urination
- Dizziness that doesn’t go away with rest

## **From Your Surgeon**

I am committed to getting you through the surgery and recovery period with as little anxiety and pain as possible. Please do not hesitate to ask questions and let me know if you have any problems.