



## General Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

The following instructions will provide helpful information that will assist your recovery. These are designed to be general guidelines. Remember, everyone recovers differently. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your doctor.

### Pain Medication

- You will be given a prescription for pain after surgery, usually a medication called Vicodin, Percocet, Norco or Hydrocodone Acetaminophen. **(Please Notify Our Office of any Allergies to medication, you may have.)**
- Please follow the directions on the label.
- Do not drive while taking pain medications.
- Do not take pain medications on an empty stomach. This may make you nauseated.
- Use a stool softener, gentle laxative or milk of magnesium (such as Dulcolax suppository, or pill), as constipation is common with pain medications.
- If you no longer need your prescribed pain medication, you may take over the counter pain medications such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Advil (ibuprofen) for pain.
- Refer to the medication instructions on the form titled "Medication Reconciliation" provided by the hospital. Unless otherwise instructed. Resume all pre-operative medications, including blood thinners.

### Diet

- Advance your diet as directed by your physician. Do slowly over the first 1 or 2 days.
- Do not drink alcohol in the immediate postoperative period or while taking pain medication.

## **Wound Care**

- If you have a clear see-through bandage/plastic or surgical glue over the incision (derma-bond). You may take a shower. The bandage is waterproof.
- It is not uncommon for some reddish fluid to accumulate under the plastic bandage. This is no cause for alarm.
- The clear see-through bandage, leave it on until follow up with your physician.
- If you have a gauze bandage over the incision, you may remove it in 48 hours. At that time you may shower.
- If you have narrow white tape strips over the incision (steri-strips), keep them dry for 48 hours. Do not remove them unless they are curling up at the side and almost falling off (just cut the edges, instead of pulling off, you risk pulling the incision apart).
- Staples or sutures are generally removed in 10-14 days in office.
- Many incisions will have buried absorbable sutures, which do not need to be removed.

## **Showering**

- Showers should be quick (5 minutes long). Soap usage is encouraged to keep incision clean and dry.
- Do not soak in the bathtub until instructed by your doctor.
- Avoid public swimming pools for 1 month.

## **Drain Care**

- If you have a drain, record the time and amount of drainage on a piece of paper. Empty the drain every few hours or as needed. The nurse will explain how the drain works before you are discharged from the hospital.
- Bring the drain record to the office for your post-operative visit.

## **Call Your Doctor If:**

- Your temperature is 101.5°F or higher. It is not uncommon to have a low-grade fever after surgery.
- You have new redness around the incision or if pus drains from the incision.
- Severe bleeding occurs. Apply direct pressure to the area.
- Severe abdominal pain, vomiting, or jaundice occurs (yellow tint to eyes or skin).
- If you cannot get in touch with your doctor, call or go to the nearest Emergency Room.
- Call 911 in an emergency.

## Activity

- If possible have someone with you to help you the first 24 hours after surgery.
- You may resume your pre-operative level of activity 24 hours after surgery.
- Going up stairs is not a problem.
- Listen to your body and rest when you are tired.
- Do not lift anything heavy (over 15 pounds) or as directed by your physician.
- Do not drive a motor vehicle; operate machinery or power tools for 24 hours or while taking pain medications.

## Follow-Up:

- Please make your follow-up appointment by calling the office or as instructed by your physician. Most appointments are for 10-14 days following your surgery. If you have any problems before then, do not hesitate to call our office. (623)486-7700

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