

General Surgery Discharge Instructions

Care of the Surgical Site:

- There will be dressings on your abdomen that must remain on for 3 days, unless you are otherwise instructed. It is important to keep them clean and dry until you remove them.
- If you have paper strips under the dressing remove them in 7 days.
- Do not use any creams, lotions or powders on the incision.
- Do not soak in a bath, hot tub or swimming pool for 2 weeks.
- You may shower in 24 hours after your surgery. Ensure you do not face the stream of water. Pat incision dry and reapply bandage if incision is still draining.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing on the day of surgery. Your abdomen may be bloated after the surgery due to the gas used during the procedure.
- Avoid wearing anything tight around the waist after surgery.
- Shoulder pain from insufflation may occur can be treated with pain medication and should improve over 24-36 hours.
- Abdominal bloating may occur and cause some discomfort or pain, to try to relieve this by:
 - Walking
 - Sitting on the toilet and allowing gas to pass
 - If not relieved call your surgeon.
- If you need to cough or sneeze, support your incision with a hand or pillow placed over your incision.
- No lifting over 4.5kg (10lbs) until assessed by your surgeon.

Diet:

- The type of surgery you had effects your dietary restrictions.
- Follow the appropriate diet as directed by your surgeon.

Activity:

- No driving for 24 hours after your surgery. If your pain medication makes you drowsy – do not drive.

- On the day of your surgery you will go home and rest. The activity of walking around your home is sufficient for the first day. When you are lying or sitting down, do leg and breathing exercises at least every hour while awake. Use a pillow on your abdomen when you need to cough.
- Stay mobile. Walking every day is good exercise – but nothing too strenuous. Increase the distance as you can tolerate.
- You will continue to improve and get better each day, and will be able to return to most of your normal activities within a week.
- No heavy lifting over 5 kg /10 lbs. or strenuous activities (gardening, exercising, vacuuming etc.) until you have spoken to your Surgeon at the first post-op appointment.

Follow-up:

- Keep you follow up appointment with your surgeon. If you do not receive an appointment or need to change it, please call the surgeon's office as soon as you are discharged.

CALL YOUR SURGEON OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IF YOU HAVE:

- Fever or chills (temperature of 38.5 C/101 F or higher).
- Bleeding that does not stop after 5 minutes of firm pressure being applied to the incision.
- Nausea and/or vomiting that lasts more than 24 hours and is not relieved by an anti-nausea medication (Gravol).
- Severe abdominal pain that is not relieved by the prescribed pain medication when taken as directed.
- Chest pain or shortness of breath.
- A red and painful incision with yellow-green pus coming from it.
- The incision breaks open.
- Bloating and discomfort in the lower abdomen with no urination for 6-8 hours.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO REACH YOUR SURGEON, go directly to the Emergency Department for medical attention.