

# COLON /RECTAL SURGERY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

## PAIN

During the hospitalization, you will be given pain medicine via a Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) pump for pain control. This will enable you to administer your own pain medication as you need it. You will eventually be converted to oral pain pills before discharge. When going home, you will be given a prescription for Percocet, a mild narcotic. Percocet should be taken as follows: 1 to 2 tablets every 4 hours for pain. Once pain improves or if the pain is not so severe, you may substitute Percocet with Tylenol at any time. You will likely require pain medication for intermittent pain control for a few weeks after surgery, less if performed laparoscopically.

## INCISION

All incisions will be covered by small paper tapes. The incisions, which have been closed with dissolvable stitches, are under these pieces of tape. Do not remove the small pieces of tape by yourself – they will fall off on their own in 5 to 7 days. **DO NOT PLACE ANY ANTIBIOTIC OINTMENTS OR CREAMS ON THE NEW SCAR.**

If any redness or swelling occurs around the incisions call the office. Some fluid (yellow to light red to orange) may ooze or leak from the incisions. This is generally normal. However, if the fluid is foul smelling, thick, or does not decrease in amount, call our office.

## SHOWERING/BATHING

You may shower at any time but no bathing until 2 weeks after surgery. When you shower, you can wash over the paper tapes with soap and water (they can get wet). Do not remove the small pieces of tape by yourself – they will fall off on their own in 5 to 7 days.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

You may slowly resume your regular activities as your strength allows. You may begin driving once you are no longer requiring pain medication. You should avoid lifting greater than 10 pounds for four weeks following surgery. Most patients will require 1-2 weeks of additional recovery after discharge prior to returning to work.

## DIET

No restrictions, but you should not consume a large quantity of spicy or fried foods right away. Give your body a chance to adjust. Chew your food well, and avoid foods that are difficult to digest. In general, you should use your common sense regarding your diet.

## FOLLOW UP

You should follow up for a post-operative visit approximately two weeks after discharge. If you still have staples in place, you may be asked to follow-up sooner for staple removal.

## RECOVERY

You should anticipate remaining in the hospital for approximately 4-5 days after surgery (average range 3-6 days). After leaving the hospital following colon surgery, you will undoubtedly feel fatigued. Most patients find themselves napping in the afternoons. This generally lasts a few weeks after surgery. Your appetite will slowly return to normal. Initially, your bowel movements may be looser than usual, but they should resume their normal consistency with time. This, however, will depend on how much and which part of the colon was removed at surgery. Patients generally return to work an average of 2 to 4 weeks after surgery.

## WHEN TO CONTACT THE OFFICE

Please call the office if you experience any of the following:

- Persistent fever over 101° F
- Bleeding from the rectum
- Increasing abdominal swelling
- Pain that is not relieved by your medications
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Chills
- Purulent drainage (pus) from any incision
- Redness surrounding any of your incisions that is worsening or getting bigger
- Inability to eat or drink liquids

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