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Abdominal Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

This information helps you understand how your post-discharge recovery should progress, so you have realistic expectations for the first few weeks after surgery. Following the guidelines on this sheet will help you recover from your surgery as quickly as possible and reduces the risk of some complications.

Skin/Wound Care

- . You may shower and wash the incision gently with soap and water.
- . Steri-strips over the incision are waterproof and will fall off on their own.

Activity

. It is very important to gradually and consistently increase your physical activity after surgery. You may ride in a car upon discharge from the hospital. You are free to walk and take stairs as you are able. The activity improves your lung and heart function and improves the ability of your body to use nutrition to heal.

- . Fatigue is 1 of the chief complaints following surgery. This will gradually get better over the next 4 to 6 weeks.
- . Avoid lifting objects greater than 10 pounds (i.e. nothing heavier than a gallon of milk) for 4 to 6 weeks.
- . You can resume driving approximately 2-3 weeks after surgery if you are off all pain medications and can move freely without pain.

Diet

- . Stay on the low-residue diet that the nutritionist provided for you for approximately 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, gradually re-introduce other foods back into your diet.
- . Drink plenty of fluids: 6 to 8 glasses per day.
- . You may take nutrition supplement or protein shakes (e.g. Ensure™, Boost™)

Discharge Medications

- . Use pain medications as directed. As your incisional pain subsides, you may use Tylenol™ or Ibuprofen™ instead of the narcotic pain medication.
- . Many prescription pain medications contain Tylenol™ (acetaminophen). Do not take additional Tylenol™ if your prescription pain medication already contains Tylenol™.
- . Narcotic pain medications are constipating. You may use a stool softener if needed.
- . Pain medications should be refilled during weekday business hours (before noon on Fridays). Please plan ahead.

Follow-Up Appointment

- . Call and make an appointment to see your surgeon in 1 to 2 weeks.

When to Call the Physician

- . Temperature greater than 101 degrees° F.
- . Redness or drainage of pus from the incision site.
- . Nausea or vomiting that persists more than 12 hours.
- . Worsening abdominal pain.
- . Severe leg pain or swelling.

Should any questions or concerns arise, please call our office:

Monday – Friday: 9am-5pm 310-854-3580

Weekends, Holidays or after-hours, please call 310-854-3580.