



# Open Abdominal Surgery

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## Are there any diet restrictions?

- Return to your same diet as before surgery
- Taking smaller portions, more frequently during the day may help in transitioning to your regular diet (6-8 small meals per day)
- Avoid constipation; drink plenty of water and caffeine-free fluids. Take stool softener while you are taking prescribed pain medication

## When can I go back to normal activities?

- No lifting anything greater than 5 -10 pounds for 6 weeks. This includes strenuous activities such as vacuuming, lifting children, groceries, laundry, moving furniture, mowing lawns, sports activities
- No driving until your first post-op visit. You may ride as a passenger.
- You may climb stairs in moderation
- Walk as much as tolerated. This is the only activity/exercise allowed for 6 weeks
- Resume sexual activity as discussed at your first post-op visit

## How will I care for my incision?

- You may shower your incision once home. Gently wash incision and pat dry. Leave open to the air and dry; no use of powders or creams. No tub baths, hot tubs, or swimming until the incision is completely healed
- Avoid tight clothing around your incision site or fabrics which may irritate the skin. Wear loose comfortable clothing
- If staples are present, these will be removed at your follow-up clinic visit. You may still shower.

- If steri strips are present, these will fall off in about 1-2 weeks. DO NOT pull them off earlier.

### **How I manage my pain at home?**

- For best pain control take your pain medication at regular intervals, about every 4-6 hrs. This will prevent pain build-up that may occur. Use only as much prescription pain medications as you need.
- Taking over the counter ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) alternated with prescription pain medication may improve pain control
- Do not drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medication

### **When should I notify my physician?**

- Temperature above 101°F
- Significant increase in wound pain or discomfort
- Excessive redness, swelling, or drainage from the incision site.
- The incision begins to open
- Change in overall health; nausea, vomiting, chills, profuse sweating, diarrhea, constipation

### **Follow-up:**

- You will return to the clinic for your follow-up visit about two weeks after discharge. If you have not already received an appointment, one will be arranged for you and you will be notified by mail.
- Nurse Clinician- 734-936-5781 (M-F)
- SGI Resident on-call (after hours, holidays) through hospital paging- 734-936-6267

Disclaimer: This document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Talk with your doctor if you have Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options.

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