



# Instructions Following Abdominal Surgery

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## What are my post-operative instructions?

The following information and instructions are for your continued care after discharge from the hospital. Please read the information (including the After Visit Summary provided to you at the time of discharge) carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the nurse at 734-936-5738.

## How do I take care of my incision?

- Your incision(s) may have surgical glue, dissolvable sutures with white pieces of tape called steri strips, or staples. These may be covered with a plastic dressing (Opsite) with a plain gauze dressing underneath.
- **If you have an Opsite/ gauze dressing**, you should remove it 48 hours after surgery.
- **If you have steri strips or surgical glue**, do not remove them. Steri strips will fall off naturally in 7-10 days, or we will remove them in clinic. Surgical glue (Indermil) will fall off over period of up to 2-3 weeks.
- Do not put any topical ointments or lotions on the incisions.
- You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Do not rub over the incisions with a washcloth or towel. **No tub baths, hot tubs, or swimming-until evaluated at your clinic appointment.**
- Avoid tight clothing around your incision(s) or fabric that may irritate your skin such as wool, hooks and buckles.

## Should I continue taking my prescribed medications?

- Take medications as prescribed. Please review the After Visit Summary provided to you at the time of discharge for details.

## How will I manage my pain at home?

- For best pain control take your pain medication at regular intervals for the first couple of days, about every 4-6 hours. This will prevent pain build-up,

which occurs when medication is taken on an as needed basis.

- Use only as much prescription pain medication as you need (i.e. 1 tablet instead of 2).
- Taper off of the prescription pain medication as pain decreases, stopping narcotics first.
- Use over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol®) if your doctor allows. When using over-the-counter medication, never use more than what is prescribed on the package directions. Do not take more than 3000mg of Tylenol® in a 24 hour period. Do not take more than 2400mg of Ibuprofen (such as Motrin® or Advil®) in a 24 hour period.
- While taking pain medication you may not drive, work, or drink alcohol.

### **Are there any diet restrictions?**

- Drink 1-2 quarts of caffeine-free, non-alcoholic fluid every day to avoid constipation (water, juices, milk, caffeine-free pop, etc.). If you are on a fluid restricted diet, please discuss this with your provider.

### **What activity restrictions will I have?**

- Walk as much as tolerated and allowed by your doctor Walk at least 5 minutes every 2 hours between breakfast and bedtime for the first 3 days.
- Do not lift, pull or push objects greater than 10 pounds for 6 weeks. This includes vacuuming, lifting children or groceries, walking the dog, mowing lawns, snow shoveling, etc. Please discuss other specific physical activities with the doctor at your clinic appointment.
- **Do not drive** while taking pain medications. You may drive when you have **no** pain - usually in 1-2 weeks following surgery.
- You may climb stairs in moderation but do not overtire.
- Resume sexual activity after your doctor at first post-op visit.

### **When will I receive follow-up care?**

- You will be scheduled to return to see your physician in the General Surgery Clinic typically in 1-2 weeks.
- If you do not receive a scheduled appointment at the time of discharge, please call the clinic at (734) 936-5738 to make an appointment.

## When should I call my doctor?

Notify your doctor for any of the following signs and symptoms of possible infection:

- Temperature above 101 degrees.
- Increase in pain or discomfort.
- Redness, swelling, drainage at incision site(s). A small amount of clear yellow or pinkish-yellow drainage is normal for 1-2 days following surgery.
- If incision begins to open.

Call if you have any changes in your overall health such as having:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Chills
- profuse (excessive) sweating
- diarrhea
- constipation
- inability to urinate or completely empty bladder

## What is the number to call?

- On weekdays contact the General Surgery Call Center at 734- 734-936-5738 (Monday - Friday, 8am -5 PM)
- On weekends, holidays, or after business hours call 734-936-6267 (hospital paging) and ask for the surgery resident on-call.

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