

Postoperative Instructions: Abdominal Wall and Umbilical Hernia Surgery

- 1) Start with light liquids to make sure your stomach is settled following the anesthetic. If you feel well, you may advance your diet to a regular diet, as tolerated today. At any time you experience any nausea or vomiting; simply stop and take ice chips and light liquids until the nausea and vomiting resolves.

- 2) Rest as much as you can in the first 48 hours, making your most strenuous activity to get up to go to the bathroom or to get something to eat. Take scheduled walks around the house several times daily, but do not be anymore active than this. After 48 hours you can begin to be on your feet, as tolerated, and ride in a car. As soon as you are pain free and not taking any further pain medications, you may safely drive a car. Remember, the more active you are in the first two days, the more swelling and discomfort you may have.

- 3) You may remove the bandage on _____ . When you remove the bandage you will see some small white tapes applied directly to the skin over the incision. There may be dried blood on these tapes. Leave these tapes in place and do not remove them. There are stitches under the skin that will dissolve. If the tapes come loose do not worry, as the stitches will hold the wound together. The tapes do offer protection of the wound and should not be removed unless they come loose on their own.

- 4) On the day that you remove your bandage, you may take a shower. Do not soak in the tub. Do not rub or scrub the wound. If the tapes get wet, as they will, simply blot them dry with a towel and they will dry satisfactorily along with the wound.

- 5) Place an ice bag over the wound for the first 48 hours. This can easily be done by placing ice cubes in a plastic zip lock bag and wrapping the bag in a towel. It can then be placed over the wound several times a day. This may help keep the swelling and bruising down. After 48 hours the application of dry heat from a heating pad at very low heat may also be beneficial.

- 6) Take medication for pain and nausea as prescribed. You may be given two different pain pills, which can be taken simultaneously. The medication for nausea can be taken to correct any nausea that occurs from anesthetic or the pain medication.

- 7) It is very normal to become constipated following an anesthetic and while taking pain medication. It is perfectly all right to take a laxative; such as Milk of Magnesia, Dulcolax or Dulcolax suppositories, which can be bought over the counter.

- 8) It is occasionally difficult to empty your bladder following surgery. Be sure to restrict your fluids following surgery for the first 24 hours, as an overfilled bladder will be more difficult to empty. If you cannot empty your bladder, try sitting in a tub of hot water that is just deep enough to lower your bottom and genitalia in the water, but not deep enough to get the wound wet. It is okay to empty your bladder into that war tub water. If you still cannot empty your bladder, contact the Outpatient Nursing Department or me.

- 9) Should you experience a fever greater than 101 F, wound bleeding or yellowish drainage; please let me know.

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10) Call my office for an appointment as soon as possible. We would like to see you for a return visit in approximately 7 to 10 days, but do call for an appointment as early as possible.

11) It may be necessary for you to contact me following your surgery to ask questions regarding your surgery or care, or to have medications refilled. Although we will be available to take your calls in the evening hours, as a courtesy to us and to assure you better service since resources are limited after hours, please call as early in the day as possible. If you think you are having a problem with your incision or need medical care, it is better to call earlier in the day; not only to allow us to see you if necessary, but to make sure that your pharmacy is open. If your medications are running low, please call us for refills before they run out so that you do not have to go for an extended period of time without them.