



Discharge Instructions for Abdominal Surgery Patients

Office Visits:

- Call the office soon to make an appointment for approximately one week after surgery.
- If you still have staples in your wound, they should be removed no earlier than 7 days after surgery unless advised otherwise.

Diet: Resume your regular diet unless advised differently.

Wound Care:

- You may shower or sponge baths. Wash over the incision with regular soap and water.
- If you have steri-strips tapes, leave them on for one week. You can leave them off if they fall off before then.
- Wear a light gauze dressing over the incision if your clothing irritates the incision.
- As the surgical wound heals, there is likely to be slight redness around the staples and some swelling, lumpiness, and bruising around the incision. These will gradually improve with time.

Please call the office as soon as possible if any of the following occur:

- **Sharp increase in pain, redness, or swelling of the incision**
- **Presence of drainage or persistent bleeding**
- **Fever over 101°F**

Activity:

- Light activity is allowed.
- Gradually increase activity within your tolerance.
- Walking is the best exercise for you at this time.
- Climbing stairs is fine, but go slowly at first.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 25-30 pounds for six weeks after surgery.
- Do not drive until a) all your pain is gone and your energy level is normal, and b) you've had your first postoperative office visit.

Pain Medication Warning: You may be prescribed a narcotic for pain relief such as Darvocet, Vicodin, or Percocet. Narcotic can cause drowsiness and constipation. Do not drive a car, work around machines, or drink alcohol while taking narcotics. Drink plenty of liquids and take a stool softener (Colace) to avoid constipation. You may take Milk of Magnesia or a Dulcolax suppository to relieve constipation.

Special Instructions:

Please call the office if you have any questions or problems. If necessary, the "on-call" surgeon for the practice can be reached after hours through the answering service.