

General Post-Operative Instructions

Your surgeon will instruct you on your specific post-operative directions. This page will provide general information to help you with your care and recovery. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office at 303-337-5600.

1. Care of Your Incision

Wash your hands before and after touching your incision(s). Hand washing is the best way to prevent infection. Watch your incision for any separation, bleeding or signs of infection including redness, tenderness, swelling, drainage, unusual odor, or if the area feels warmer than the rest of your body. Call our office if you experience a temperature of 101°F or higher.

If you have been sent home with steri-strips over your incision, leave these alone. You may gently shower the day after surgery, but do not remove the steri-strips. Apply an ice pack for thirty minute periods as needed for pain or swelling during the first two days following surgery.

2. Diet

Following your surgery you should gradually increase your dietary intake. Begin with a bland type of diet, such as soup and crackers, Gatorade or tea and gradually work your way to a normal diet. Drink lots of fluids and include fiber in your diet such as fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grain cereals. Eating these foods and drinking lots of fluids can help prevent constipation.

3. Activity

When you are home from the hospital it is important to be up and moving around the house. Go slowly when first getting up from the lying position. Sit on the side of the bed for a minute or two to let your body adjust before standing up.

For the first week following your surgery you should avoid any strenuous physical activity. Walking short distances and going up and down stairs is acceptable. Do not drive for at least five days after your surgery and do not drive if you have taken any prescription pain medication within the past 24 hours. Avoid lifting heavy objects, moving furniture, etc.

4. Medication & Pain Control

You should resume all your home medications. Your surgeon will direct you in resuming aspirin or other anticoagulants. Take your pain medication with food as ordered by your doctor for pain relief. Do not take pain medication more often than it has been ordered.

If you experience nausea during the postoperative period, it is usually related to the pain medication and can be treated by stopping or reducing the pain medication. You can gradually taper this over to plain Tylenol.

5. Bowel Movements

It is not uncommon for patients who have had anesthesia and who are on pain medication to become constipated. This should be treated by gradually increasing your activity and drinking a normal amount of water to maintain hydration. A high fiber diet or dietary fiber supplements will also help. Milk of Magnesia or Colace stool softener may also be used and can be found at your local drug store.