



Recovering after Abdominal Surgery

- Do not drive a car or operate heavy equipment for at least two weeks after your surgery or while taking narcotic medications.
- Remain in town for at least two weeks after discharge from the hospital, unless you discuss leaving specifically with your doctor.
- Restart aspirin or other blood thinners one week after your surgery; check with your doctor before restarting.
- Resume taking the prescription medications you took prior to being admitted to the hospital, unless specifically advised otherwise. You will receive a list of medications we expect you to be on when you are discharged from the hospital – if there is a difference compared to what you took before surgery and you aren't sure why, call the surgeon or your primary care doctor.
- In many cases you will be discharged before you have your first bowel movement. We expect that you will have a bowel movement within 2-3 days of discharge. Narcotic medications are constipating, so while you are on these follow a gentle bowel program such as using prune juice, dried fruits, or colace 100 mg twice a day (can be purchased at any pharmacy). If your doctor gives you specific instructions, follow these. If you have not had a bowel movement by three days after discharge, call your doctor's office at the numbers below.
- Do not lift anything heavy for four weeks after the operation; this can increase the likelihood of developing hernias at your incision sites.
- If your surgery involves the vagina, do not insert ANYTHING (human, tampon, or anything else) into the vagina for at least 6 weeks or until your surgeon tells you it is okay.
- If you are male or if you are female and your surgery does not involve the vagina, you can resume sexual relations in two weeks or as your doctor instructs.
- Your surgical incision will be very susceptible to sunburn if exposed to the sun or tanning lights. If you burn your surgical incision, you may have abnormal healing resulting in abnormal or unsightly scarring as well as significant permanent darkening of the scar (hyper pigmentation), making it stand out from the surrounding skin more than usual. For at least 6 months after your surgery, keep your incisions covered well when in the sun and/or cover them with sun block. Do not expose your scars to tanning lights.
- If you feel hot or have chills, check your temperature and call the doctor's office during the day or the on-call doctor at night.
- If you have bleeding from your rectum or any of your incisions of more than a half-cup, call the doctor's office during the day or the on-call doctor at night.

Someone is always available 24/7 by calling (602) 995-0822