

Open Abdominal Surgery (Esophageal, Gastric, Pancreas, Liver or Colon)

Open abdominal surgeries do involve a hospital stay. If you had general anesthesia, you may feel drowsy or nauseated for a temporary period of time that may last 12 to 24 hours.

Incision Care:

Some pain, bruising and a minimal amount of a clear yellowish discharge is expected and anticipated. If you notice any major swelling, bleeding or severe discomfort after surgery, notify the hospital staff, or if at home, go to the emergency room.

Your abdominal wound may be covered by a gauze dressing. You may remove your gauze dressing and shower on the second morning (48 hours) after your surgery date. You will likely have small pieces of tape (steri-strips) over your incision. These will naturally fall off over time, do not manually remove them. You may also have staples, which can be left uncovered. They may be irritating to the skin and cause redness. If this persists or enlarges, dab the area with rubbing alcohol using cotton balls twice a day.

Following abdominal surgery, it is not unusual for the abdominal wound to drain some clear fluid. This is very common for patients who are overweight. Don't be alarmed. It is safe to take a shower. Apply dry gauze to the abdominal wound. If you notice skin separation at this site, cover the area with dry gauze and notify the office. It is crucial to notify your surgeon or go to the emergency room if you notice any unusual intra-abdominal organs protruding through your incision. This is a surgical emergency.

It is necessary for you to continue to wear your abdominal binder as advised. Usual recommended time is anywhere from 4-6 weeks. You may take off the binder at night when resting in bed.

Diet:

You may resume a regular diet when you return home, however it is recommended that you eat light, easily digestible food for the first day or so after surgery and it is highly recommended that you avoid foods that give you excessive gas. Avoid hot, spicy foods in the initial few days to allow your gastrointestinal tract to return to normal. To avoid constipation, particularly if you are taking narcotics for post-operative pain control, you may have a gentle laxative such as Milk of Magnesia.

Medication:

Please be sure to take all medications that you take on a regular basis. However, it would be a good idea to avoid Aspirin, Motrin or Advil for five days after your operation, unless prescribed or recommended by your surgeon.

Pain medication will be prescribed for you; you may take it as needed. You should avoid driving, operating heavy equipment. Side effects of narcotics may include nausea, vomiting, lightheadedness, rash,

irritability, or fatigue. Once pain begins to subside, you may try switching to some plain Tylenol after the first day or two since you may no longer need the narcotic. This will help to avoid constipation as well.

Activity:

You are to avoid lifting in the first two weeks no greater than 20 pounds. After two weeks that can be increased to no more than 30 pounds. Some bruising around the surgical site is not unusual and will resolve over the next few days.

Activities such as deep breathing, walking and going up stairs will encourage the resolution of some of the stiffness and discomfort and is highly recommended.

Resumption of driving is dependent on the type of procedure you have had and your level of pain and mobility, generally a few days to up to two weeks after surgery. After major abdominal surgery, it is recommended you wait until your first post-operative visit to the surgeon before initiating any driving.

Call the Office at (815) 744-0330:

- When you return home from surgery to schedule a follow-up appointment to take place 7-10 days after surgery date.
- If you have bleeding from the surgical site that requires more than two maxi-pad dressing changes.
- You are still unable to have a bowel movement after trying Milk of Magnesia on the fourth day following surgery.
- You develop a fever of 101 degrees or higher following the day of surgery. However, low-grade fevers are not unusual after abdominal surgery and should be managed with coughing, deep breathing, and walking. You may take over the counter Tylenol every 6 hours as needed.
- If you have any other problems or concerns.

Go to the Emergency Room:

- If you have been unable to urinate six to eight hours after being discharged from your surgery and have a feeling of fullness.
- If you notice any unusual intra-abdominal organs protruding through your incision.
- If you have serious problems and are unable to reach your surgeon or office staff.