

Post-Op Instructions Following Surgery

***If you have increasing redness around the incision sites, thick drainage, or fever above 101°F call the office as soon as possible (314-434-1211) to speak with our clinical staff.**

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Pain** - Everyone's pain tolerance is different. You may be very sore for 3 days following your surgery. Each day will get better, thereafter (*i.e. you will begin to notice improvement on day 4-5*). However, you may not feel 100% improved for 6-8 weeks after surgery, depending on your surgery.
 - *Those having an open repair may experience more pain than those having a laparoscopic repair.*
 - *If your surgery was laparoscopic, you may experience shoulder pain from retained gas.*
- **Bowel Movements** - It is not unusual to go a day or two without having a bowel movement after your surgery. However, it is not acceptable to go more than a few days without a bowel movement.
 - Refer to our "Preventing Post-Op Constipation" sheet for instructions to follow immediately after your surgery. *Available on our website.*
- **Drainage** - Your incision(s) *may* drain a small amount.
 - Clear to light pink/red drainage is normal a few days after surgery. If the area is constantly wet notify our office.
 - *Apply a loose dressing or band aid to stop any drainage from soiling clothing. Change often.*
- **Fatigue** - You may feel tired after surgery for several weeks. You should plan on about 85% improvement by post-op day #7, however, you might not feel 100% for 6 weeks after surgery. Continue to be active, but allow time to rest.
- **Swelling** - You may turn black and blue (bruise) around your incision and surrounding tissue. Gravity will push the bruising down as it resolves. Swelling may become severe at times.

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Ice / Heat** - You may apply ice to incision for 1st day after your surgery in 15-20 minute increments. *Be sure to place a towel between your skin and the ice pack to avoid direct contact. Not very effective after 24 hours.*
 - A heating pad may also bring some comfort when used starting 2 days after your surgery in 15-20 minute increments. **Do not use high heat.**
- **Skin Glue (Dermabond)** – if this was placed in the operating room you will not have any dressings to your incision(s). If this is present (*and your do NOT have a drain*), you may begin showering immediately after your surgery.
 - Some people can develop allergies to the skin glue. If you notice increasing surrounding redness or itching to your incision please notify our office.
- **Showering** – If you do not have a drain in place & do not have skin glue, remove your outer dressing(s) and shower **2 full days** after your surgery. You may re-cover with gauze if you prefer, but this is only necessary if you are having drainage.
 - Do **NOT** soak healing incision site(s) – *i.e. a bath, hot tub, swimming pool*
 - If you have small strips of tape directly on your skin (steri-strips), under your dressing, leave those on and do not remove them until 7-14 days after surgery.
 - The sutures used in your incision are most likely self-dissolving and should not need to be removed.
- **Drain(s)** - If a drain was placed, you will need to make an appointment with our office to have it removed when it is draining less than 30 ml of fluid in a full 24 hour period (*usually on the 3rd-5th post-op day*).

- Go to our website, www.StLouisSurgical.com, to watch a video on how to properly care for your drain.
 - Empty the drain at least twice a day and record your output. After emptying, be sure to squeeze the bulb tightly to collapse it before placing the cap to ensure there is suction.
 - You do not need to save the fluid for your surgeon.
 - You should not shower until this is removed.
- You may shower the day after your drain has been removed.
- **Abdominal Binder** - If a binder was placed, it is important to remember that its job is to support and cradle your abdomen, not cause pain. You may adjust it as needed to achieve this.
 - We suggest wearing a clean t-shirt under your binder that you change daily. This will help prevent irritation to your skin.
 - If your binder prevents you from getting a good night sleep you may remove it. Reapply each morning.
 - Your binder is machine washable, but be sure to air dry. The best time to do this is while you are sleeping.
 - If you did not receive a binder and feel it may be beneficial, one can be purchased from a sporting goods store, pharmacy, or online.

MEDICATIONS

- You may be sent home with prescription pain medicine. Try to first control pain with your usual over the counter medications, like Tylenol or Ibuprofen (*Advil*), following the package instructions. Use the narcotic pain prescription only if the Tylenol or Ibuprofen is not effective.
 - You **cannot** drive while on prescription pain medicine.
 - All narcotics can cause severe constipation, as well as possible nausea and vomiting.
 - Refer to “Preventing Post-Op Constipation” education sheet for instructions (*found on our website*). We recommend starting these measures as soon as you arrive home from your surgery.

RESTRICTIONS

- Depending on what you had done, you may have a restriction to not do any strenuous exercise for 6-8 weeks after surgery unless directed otherwise. No lifting over 10-15 lbs. (*Ex: a gallon of milk weighs 8 lbs*) to avoid re-injuring the site.
- You may walk as much as you want, and we recommend that you move as much as possible.
 - Fatigue after surgery is normal and can take up to a few weeks to completely resolve.
- **Diet** - dietary restrictions depend on the surgery. If none were discussed with you, you likely do not have any.

FOLLOW UP

- If a drain was placed, call the office for a “**drain removal**” visit with the Nurse Practitioner once you reach less than 30ml of output in a full 24 hour period - *if applicable*.
- Call the office for a “**post-op**” visit 1-2 weeks after your surgery with your surgeon.
 - *If staples are present, they will not be removed until 12-16 days post-op*
- **If you have increasing redness around the incision, drainage, or fever above 101°F call the office.**

The office is open for phone calls from 8am - 5 pm Monday-Thursday, Friday 8am -4 pm. For an after-hours emergency, call the Medical Exchange @ 314-364-5262 to speak to the surgeon on call.

Thank you for choosing



Be sure to check out www.StLouisSurgical.com for information & instructions, videos, and MORE