



Division of General & Gastrointestinal Surgery

PATIENT DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING

COLORECTAL SURGERY

DIET

- ✓ Eat Foods that are easy to digest. Do NOT eat foods that give you gas, or cause constipation(i.e. broccoli, cheese, beans) for the first 7 days after surgery
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids.
- ✓ Your appetite may be less than normal. Eat when you are hungry. Do not force yourself to eat! Concentrate on fluids. It is important to stay hydrated.

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Do NOT drink alcohol, drive or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours after your surgery or while taking pain medication
- ✓ Do NOT do heavy lifting(nothing more than a gallon of milk) for 6 weeks after your surgery
- ✓ Light activity (i.e. walking, office work, climbing stairs, etc.) as soon as you feel comfortable is fine. Sexual activity is fine as soon as you feel comfortable.
- ✓ You may feel fatigued for a few weeks after surgery. Take a nap when you feel tired. However, do NOT stay in bed all day. Make sure you walk around every two hours.
- ✓ Do NOT drive a car until after you are off pain medication and can get in and out of a car comfortably.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

We will supply you with a prescription for a mild narcotic pain medication. You are not required to take it. If you do take it, please do not drive or drink alcohol as these in combination may make you drowsy. Alternatively, you may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil) as needed.

MEDICATIONS

- ✓ Unless otherwise directed, you may resume your medications.
- ✓ Begin taking psyllium(i.e. Metamucil) to soften your stools. The usual dose is 2 spoonfuls/packet. You may start with 1 spoonful/packet and gradually increase to 2. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids. You will have a bowel movement within 2 days. Do **NOT** take a laxative to hurry bowel motion.
- ✓ If you were prescribed antibiotics, take them until they are finished.

INCISION CARE

- ✓ It is normal to have some bruising and swelling around the incision.
- ✓ Gently cleanse the area around the incision(s) daily with mild soap and water.
- ✓ Change the dressing daily to keep the incision clean and dry.
- ✓ Drainage will decrease as the wound(s) heal. When it has closed completely and there is no drainage, you will not need a dressing.
- ✓ You MAY take a shower, but avoid baths and saunas for 2-3 weeks after surgery.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

- ✓ If you have an increase in pain over several days that is persistent.
- ✓ If you have new redness or swelling of the wound.
- ✓ If you have a sudden increase in wound drainage, especially if it is cloudy or has a foul odor.
- ✓ If you develop a fever $>101^{\circ}$ F
- ✓ Persistent vomiting or diarrhea.

FOLLOW-UP:

- ✓ Please call the first business day after discharge to schedule a follow-up appointment.
- ✓ In case of emergencies, call your doctor's office. If the office is closed, contact the hospital operator at **(617) 726-2000** and have your surgeon or the surgeon-on-call paged.