



Division of General & Gastrointestinal Surgery

*PATIENT DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING*

## OPEN HERNIA SURGERY

### DIET

- ✓ Unless otherwise directed, you may resume your regular diet.
- ✓ Eat plenty of fiber to help with constipation.
- ✓ You 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.
- ✓ You may drive after the pain is gone and you have stopped taking narcotics.
- ✓ You may perform any activity. Pain may limit you initially. Sexual activity is fine as soon as you are comfortable.
- ✓ You should try to get up and walk around as much as possible. Walking stretches the muscles and relieves pain.

### PAIN MANAGEMENT

- ✓ Ice packs to the groin area can help relieve pain and swelling.  
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.
- ✓ If constipation occurs, Psyllium (i.e. Metamucil) is the best remedy (follow the directions on the package. You may wish to take an ounce of milk of magnesia.
- ✓ If you were prescribed antibiotics, take them until they are finished.

### INCISION CARE

- ✓ Your incision may be covered with a waterproof dressing (Tegaderm). Leave it on for 2-3 days.

- ✓ It is normal for blood and/or fluid to collect under the dressing.
- ✓ Leave the steri-strips (little white strips of tape) in place after you take off the dressing. These will fall off by themselves. If after 10 days they have not fallen off, you may remove them yourself.
- ✓ You may shower but remove the Tegaderm if the shower water gets under the dressing.

#### COMMON PROBLEMS

- ✓ It is normal to have some bruising or swelling around the incision.
- ✓ For male patients, there may be some swelling of the testicle on the side where the hernia was and some bruising of the scrotum and penis. An icepack will help.

#### WHEN TO CALL YOUR DR.

- ✓ If you develop a fever  $>101^{\circ}$  F
- ✓ If you have a lot of swelling or bleeding.
- ✓ If you have a sudden increase in wound drainage, especially if it has pus or a foul odor.
- ✓ 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.