

Inguinal Hernia Repair Instructions after Surgery

Activity

You may return to normal unrestricted activity right after surgery, as long as you are not experiencing uncomfortable pain. Your level of discomfort should prevent you from over-exerting yourself: don't lift or strain beyond the point where it hurts. You may climb stairs immediately.

It is normal to feel dizzy and sleepy after surgery. You may tire easily and not have a lot of energy for a few days to a week.

Restrictions:

- ✓ Do not make any personal or business decisions for 24 hours.
- ✓ No strenuous activity or heavy lifting for two weeks (6 weeks for weight training).
- ✓ Do not drive or operate machinery as long as you are taking narcotic painkillers or still experiencing significant pain.
- ✓ You may resume sexual activity as soon as you can tolerate it without much discomfort.
- ✓ You may return to work as follows:
 - Relatively sedentary job: 2-5 days
 - Moderately physical job: 5-10 days
 - Physically taxing job: 10-14 days or later (check with your surgeon)

Dressing and Showering

Remove the dressing - or the Band-Aids if they are present - from your wounds two days following the surgery. You may begin to shower at that time; do not bathe. Leave the Steristrips (pieces of white tape directly on your wounds) in place and do not pull these off; they will eventually fall off on their own. You should need no further dressings.

Diet

Drink fluids and eat lightly on the day of your operation; then resume your usual dietary habits.

Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours or while taking pain medications.

Medications

Resume your normal routine medicines.

You will be given a prescription for narcotic painkillers; you may take them as prescribed. Beware that narcotic painkillers may make you drowsy or inattentive, and can also cause nausea and constipation.

If the pain is not too severe, you may take *instead* two extra-strength Tylenol (or generic acetaminophen) by mouth every 4-6 hours as needed to control discomfort. Avoid taking ibuprofen (such as Advil, Motrin, Aleve) or aspirin for 48 hours after your surgery.

Complications or Problems

Please call the office for any of the following problems – someone is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

- Redness around or drainage from your wound
- Fever over 101°F, or chills
- Shortness of breath
- Productive cough
- New or increasing right shoulder pain
- Persistent or recurrent nausea and vomiting
- Inability to urinate eight hours after surgery
- Excessive bleeding from the wound site
- Pain not relieved by pain medication
- Any problems that you think may be related to your operation and about which you are not sure.

Return to Office

Please phone the office the day of or the business day after your discharge and make an appointment to be seen 10-14 days after discharge, or as we've otherwise instructed you.

Frequent Problems

Constipation: It may take a few days before you have a bowel movement. Bowel irregularity is expected with surgery and pain medication. Take prune juice and/or a stool softener/laxative of your choice if you feel constipated.

Nausea and vomiting: This may occur during the first 2 days following surgery. If it fails to resolve or if it begins later than 2 days, it may be a side effect of narcotic pain medications, so these should be stopped if possible. If symptoms persist, call the office.

Sore throat: If you had general anesthesia, you may have a sore throat for a few days. This is due to the breathing tube that was placed by the anesthesiologist and should resolve.

Bruising and swelling: Within a few days after surgery, a man will often notice impressive purple or black coloring at the base of his penis or on his scrotum; it is normal and will fade away. Uncomfortable swelling can also involve the testicles and scrotum in a man but doesn't usually last more than a few days.

Bulging where your hernia was: This may appear as though your hernia has returned. It is almost always due to some fluid build up in the area where your hernia used to be. Your body will absorb it over the next few weeks.