

Center for Colon & Rectal Health, Inc.

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COLON RESECTION POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

WOUND CARE: You are allowed to take a bath or shower unless specifically instructed otherwise.

- You have staples or non-absorbable suture in your abdominal incision. These staples or sutures will remain in place until we remove them either in the hospital before discharge or in our office later - typically in 2 weeks.
- You have a dissolvable suture in your abdominal incision. Sometimes a single small knot will need to be removed in the office two to three weeks after surgery. Steri-strips, if applied, may begin to peel off. If this occurs, you may remove them.
- If you were sent home with an Aqua Cell dressing, it should be removed the fifth day after surgery.
- If your wound was left open, wound care should have been set up for you. Please note you may shower with the dressings off prior to having your packing changed.
- If you were sent home with a wound Vac system, please bring your Vac supplies to the office for your post-op visit.

For comfort and for protection of your clothing, a light cotton gauze dressing or large Band-Aid type dressing can be kept over the wound at all times to prevent the wound from rubbing against your clothing or underwear. This dressing should be removed before showering. A small amount of discharge from the wound is not uncommon and, if there is no fever or increasing pain, may be ignored until your next visit with us. For comfort and to aid healing, you may use a heating pad over your incisions. Be sure to use no higher than medium setting for no more than 20 minutes. We strongly recommend you get one with an automatic shut off feature.

MEDICATIONS: Resume all of your usual medications at home unless instructed otherwise, along with new medications we may have prescribed. You may have been given a prescription for pain medication upon discharge. The pain medication should be taken only as necessary.

Frequently, stronger pain medication can cause constipation and other, undesirable, side effects. Taking Konsyl, Metamucil, or another natural fiber supplement daily will help promote a quicker return of normal bowel function. Milk of Magnesia may be used as needed if constipation should occur.

Do not drive, operate any machinery, or make important decisions while on pain medication. Oftentimes a long-acting, over-the-counter pain medication, such as Aleve, can take care of incisional pain without making you drowsy. The recommended dosage on the label should not be exceeded.

ACTIVITY: Use common sense as far as your activity is concerned. You will tire easily for several weeks. Do not do anything hazardous, such as driving, if you are taking any prescription pain medications. Generally, driving locally is feasible in about 10 to 14 days after surgery if you are recovering uneventfully. We ask that you avoid driving any long distances for 4 weeks as there is a definite risk of fatigue leading you to fall asleep behind the wheel. This is an excellent time to get back into shape by walking a little more each day. Remember that you will tire more easily, so do not walk too far as you may have difficulty getting back home. Avoid lifting anything heavier than 20 pounds or so for 8 weeks as this may help prevent you from getting a hernia in your incision. Please do not smoke. Smoking interferes with wound healing. If your surgery involved your vagina or lower rectum, please ask us for specific advice on sexual activity.

DIET: There are no specific food restrictions, but remember that you will fill-up more quickly. Overeating may lead to nausea and vomiting. If you are taking pain medication, you will be prone to constipation. A diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole-wheat starches will help prevent this. Chew your food well and drink plenty of water.

FOLLOW-UP: You will need a follow-up visit approximately two weeks after you leave the hospital unless you are instructed otherwise at the time of discharge. Please call the office to make an appointment.

REASONS TO CONTACT THE OFFICE: Watch out for the following signs or symptoms:
Excessive swelling or redness of the wound. Extensive drainage or bleeding from the wound. Increasing abdominal pain. Fever or chills. General weakness. Loss of appetite. Nausea or vomiting. Difficulty or pain with urination. Should any of these occur or if you have any other worrisome concerns, please call our office right away for advice.