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Recovery/Post-operative Instructions

**Incisional and Ventral Hernia**

**If you smoke or vape, consider quitting to support wound healing and recovery.**

### **DIET & BOWEL CARE**

Start a bland, non-greasy, non-spicy diet in small portions on the day of surgery. Stay hydrated (water, juice, broth, sports drinks).

To prevent constipation, begin **Colace (Docusate Sodium)** 100mg twice daily starting the day before surgery. **TAKE WITH 12 OZ COLD WATER** Stop after your first bowel movement. If none after 2–3 days, use a **Fleet Enema. NO STIMULANT LAXATIVES**

### **MEDICATIONS**

**Pain:** You'll receive narcotics (e.g., Percocet, Oxycodone, Vicodin, Ultram, Tylenol with Codeine) and anti-nausea medication.

- *Do not drive or drink alcohol while on narcotics.*
  - Take with food. Itching without rash is a common side effect—Benadryl may help.
- Regular Meds:** Resume the evening of surgery or next morning unless instructed otherwise. Complete all prescribed antibiotics.

### **WOUND CARE**

Keep dressings clean and dry for 48 hrs. After that, remove gauze (including belly button area) and shower gently with soap and water. Pat dry.

- No soaking in tub or pool for 2 weeks
- **Staples:** Removed at follow-up
- **Steri-strips:** Leave on until they fall off naturally
- **Skin glue:** Do not scrub—wears off in ~1 week
- **Drains:** If present, follow instructions provided
- **Ice:** Apply 10 min on/off while awake for 48 hrs

Mild bruising, soreness, and a firm “healing ridge” beneath the incision are normal and will resolve in time.

### **BINDER USE**

Remove after 48 hrs for showering, then reapply. Wear **22 hrs/day for 2 weeks**. You may wear a shirt underneath to reduce irritation.

### **ACTIVITY**

Walk several times daily to improve circulation. Stairs and light walking are okay.

- Use a pillow to brace your abdomen when coughing or sneezing
- Roll to your side when rising from bed or chairs
- No lifting/pushing/pulling >10 lbs or straining your abdominal muscles
- No aerobic or sexual activity until cleared at follow-up
- Return to work/school as tolerated, with restrictions
- **Do not drive for 72 hrs or while taking narcotics**

**CALL 561.333.1335 IF YOU HAVE:** (After hours/weekends: ask for on-call doctor)

- Fever >101.5°F
- Chest pain or trouble breathing
- Redness >¼", drainage, bleeding, or pus at incision or IV site
- Increasing pain, swelling, or distention
- Trouble urinating (may need ER visit)
- Any other concerns during recovery

### **FOLLOW-UP VISIT**

Call 2–3 days post-op to schedule your follow-up (14–21 days after surgery).

Contact us with questions: **561.333.1335**