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Recovery/Post-operative Instructions
Umbilical hernia

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

DIET & BOWEL CARE

Resume bland, non-greasy, non-spicy foods in small portions the day of surgery. Drink plenty of fluids (water, juice, broth, sports drinks). To prevent constipation, start Colace (Docusate Sodium) 100mg twice daily the day before surgery; stop after your first bowel movement. **TAKE WITH 12 OZ COLD WATER** If no bowel movement in 2–3 days, use a Fleet Enema. **NO STIMULANT LAXATIVES**

MEDICATIONS

Pain: Narcotics (e.g., Percocet, Oxycodone, Ultram, Vicodin, Tylenol with Codeine) and anti-nausea meds may be prescribed.

- *Do not drive or drink alcohol while on narcotics.*
- Take with food. Benadryl may help with itching (if no rash).

Regular Meds: Resume the evening of surgery or next morning unless told otherwise. Complete all prescribed antibiotics.

WOUND CARE

Keep dressings clean and dry for 48 hrs (no showering). After 48 hrs, remove gauze (especially over belly button) and shower gently with soap/water. Pat dry—no dressing needed.

- No soaking in tub/pool for 2 weeks
- **Staples:** Removed at follow-up
- **Steri-strips:** Let fall off on their own
- **Skin glue:** Do not scrub—wears off in ~1 week
- **Drains:** If present, follow care instructions
- **Ice:** Apply over incisions 10 min on/off for first 48 hrs
- Bruising and soreness are normal. A firm “healing ridge” may appear under the incision and will fade over a few months.

BINDER USE

Remove binder at 48 hrs before first shower. Reapply after shower and wear **at least 22 hrs/day for 2 weeks**. A shirt underneath may reduce irritation.

ACTIVITY

Walk around the house several times daily to promote circulation and reduce complications.

- Use a small pillow to brace your abdomen when coughing or sneezing
- Roll to your side to get out of bed or chairs without straining
- No lifting/pushing/pulling >10 lbs or engaging abdominal muscles
- No aerobic activity or sexual activity until cleared
- Return to work/school as tolerated, with restrictions
- **No driving for 72 hrs or while taking narcotics**

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

- Fever >101.5°F
- Chest pain or trouble breathing
- Redness >¼", drainage, pus, or bleeding from incisions or IV sites
- Worsening pain, vomiting, abdominal bloating
- Difficulty urinating (may require ER visit)
- Any other post-op concerns

FOLLOW-UP VISIT

Call 2–3 days after surgery to schedule your follow-up visit (14–21 days post-op).
Contact us with any questions: **561.333.1335**