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Recovery/Post-operative Instructions

Ventral Hernia Repair

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 Meds: You'll receive a prescription for narcotics (e.g., Percocet, Oxycodone, Vicodin, Ultram, Tylenol with Codeine) and anti-nausea medication. Take as directed. Avoid driving, alcohol, or operating machinery while on narcotics. Take with food to reduce nausea. Itching without rash is common—Benadryl may help.

Regular Meds: Resume after surgery unless told otherwise. Complete any prescribed antibiotics.

WOUND CARE

Keep dressings clean/dry for 48 hrs (no shower). After 48 hrs, remove gauze and shower gently with soap/water; no dressing needed. No tub/pool soaking for 2 weeks.

- Staples: Removed at follow-up
- Steri-strips: Leave until they fall off
- Skin glue: Will wear off in ~1 week—don't scrub
- Drains: You will be given specific instructions if applicable
- Ice: Use for first 48 hrs, 10 min on/off while awake

Some soreness, bruising, and a firm "healing ridge" are expected and will resolve over time.

BINDER

Remove at 48 hrs before your first shower. Replace afterward and wear 22 hrs/day for 2 weeks. A shirt underneath may reduce irritation.

ACTIVITY

Walk around your home several times per day to improve circulation. Stairs and light walking are okay. Use a pillow to support your abdomen when coughing or breathing deeply. Roll to your side to get out of bed.

- No lifting >10 lbs, aerobic exercise, or sexual activity until cleared at follow-up
- No driving for 72 hrs post-op or while taking narcotics
- Return to work/school when you feel ready, with activity restrictions

IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING, CALL 561.333.1335:

(Follow prompts to speak with on-call doctor after hours)

- Fever >101.5°F
- Chest pain or difficulty breathing
- Redness (>¼") or drainage from wound/IV site
- Worsening pain at incision or new abdominal pain/swelling
- Vomiting or difficulty urinating

FOLLOW-UP VISIT

Call 561.333.1335 within 2–3 days of surgery to schedule a follow-up 14–21 days after your procedure.