



DUCHARME
General Surgery PLLC

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Umbilical Hernia Repair

The following is a list of instructions to help you do well with getting better from your operation. Please read over this material carefully. Instructions may vary from patient to patient, but this material should provide you with a general idea of things to do to help you get well after your operation.

ACTIVITY

You will likely feel tired for at least 1 week after your operation. Take your pain medication as needed in order to stay active, but rest as needed for recovery. Take short walks 2-3 times a day. This will help reduce the risk of blood clots and pneumonia following surgery.

DRIVING

Do not drive until you are not taking narcotic pain medication, and you feel that you are able to swerve the car to avoid an accident. You must not be taking pain medications stronger than tylenol (acetaminophen) or NSAIDs (motrin, aleve, etc.) at the time you are driving. You should not have a great deal of pain, as this will impair your ability to react quickly.

LIFTING/COUGHING

Practice 10 deep breaths every hour and 2 coughs every hour (at least 12 hours a day) while awake for the first week after surgery to reduce the risk of lung problems or pneumonia. Do not lift heavy objects more than 15 lbs for the first 4 weeks. Avoid pushing, pulling or abdominal pressure for these 4 weeks. When coughing, be sure to place a pillow over the incision and gently press inward to reduce the pressure on your incision(s).

MEDICATIONS

If you were prescribed pain medication, take it as directed. Pain medication may cause nausea if taken on an empty stomach, so it is recommended to take them with food. You may switch to plain tylenol or NSAIDs (motrin, aleve, etc.). Do not take narcotic pain medication if you do not need it. Narcotic pain medication causes constipation. Ensure plenty of water intake. If you haven't had a bowel movement on the first day following your operation, you should start taking an over-the-counter laxative such as Milk of Magnesia. You should also use ice packs to assist with pain management.

INCISIONS

Your incision(s) have been closed with dissolvable sutures on the inside and covered with steri strips and gauze. You may remove the outer dressing (clear dressing and gauze) 48 hours after your surgery. Leave the steri strips in place as they will fall off on their own in 1-2 weeks. You may shower 24 hours after surgery. The clear dressings are waterproof. If the dressings do become saturated, remove them and leave steri strips open to air. You may allow clean, soapy water to run over your steri strips, but do NOT scrub them for the first 4 weeks. Although you may shower, you should not bathe/swim for at least 4 weeks from surgery (or if the incision(s) is/are open, draining, or scabbed). Do not put any ointment or creams over the incision(s) for the first 6 weeks after surgery or if the incision(s) are open, draining, or scabbed.

DIET

You may return to normal food after you go home from your operation.

FOLLOW UP

You should call to schedule a follow up appointment in about 2 weeks, unless a follow up appointment has already been scheduled for you. Please call Dr. Ducharme's office at **(520) 526-2325** to schedule your follow up visit.

PRECAUTIONS - When should I call the Surgeon?

Diarrhea: Occasional loose bowel movements are not uncommon. However, constant watery diarrhea, especially with fever can indicate an infection of the bowels.

Fever with or without a cough: This could be a sign of lung, wound or other infection.

Sudden shortness of breath and/or chest pain: This could be related to a heart problem, such as a heart attack, or could be related to a blood clot in the lung (pulmonary embolus) or a lung infection (pneumonia).

Leg swelling and pain: Blood clot formation in the leg, particularly if it is on one side, could cause swelling and pain in your calf.

Passing out: This could be a sign of low blood pressure, which could be caused by blood loss, low blood sugar or other causes.

Sudden new stomach pain: This could be a sign of infection in your abdomen.

Wound drainage: Gold colored drainage is normal, however, call if you have drainage that is green, brown or has a foul odor. Call if your incision(s) become red and irritated.

Other Symptoms: If laparoscopic, you may have air in the soft tissues of the abdomen for a day or two. This is normal and will resolve on its own. If this persists, or worsens, call the office. You may have a hard lump where the hernia used to be, this is normal, ice helps. If this worsens, or if you have significant/worsening pain in the abdomen, call or go to the emergency room.

For urgent matters, you may call the office (520) 526-2326, and ask to have the surgeon on call paged. Please remove call blocking from your phone and refrain from using your phone so that the physician may return your call.