



COLON AND RECTAL CENTER OF ARIZONA

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A member of Arizona Associated Surgeons

Recovering from Your Abdominal Surgery

- ✓ Take daily protein drinks and maintain diet as instructed by physician.
- ✓ Do not drive a car or operate heavy equipment for at least 2 weeks after your surgery or while taking narcotic medications.
- ✓ Remain in town for at least 2 weeks after discharge from the hospital, unless you discuss leaving specifically with your doctor.
- ✓ Restart aspirin supplements, other blood thinners and vitamins/supplements 1 week after your surgery; check with your doctor before restarting.
- ✓ Resume taking the prescription medications you took prior to being admitted to the hospital, unless specifically advised otherwise. You will receive a list of medications we expect you to be on when you are discharged from the hospital.
- ✓ In many cases you will be discharged before you have your first bowel movement. We expect that you will have a bowel movement within 2-3 days if discharge. Narcotic medications are constipating, so while you are on these follow a gentle bowel program such as using prune juice, dried fruits, or Colace 100mg twice a day (can be purchased at any pharmacy). If your doctor gives you specific instructions, follow these. If you have not had a bowel movement by three days after discharge, call your doctor's office at the number below.
- ✓ Do not lift anything heavy for 4-6 weeks after the operation; this can increase the likelihood of developing hernias at your incision sites.
- ✓ If your surgery involves the vagina, do not insert ANYTHING (human, tampon, or anything else) into the vagina for at least 4 weeks or until your surgeon tells you it is ok (except for Premarin cream if given).
- ✓ If you are a male or if you are a female and your surgery did not involve the vagina, you can resume sexual relations in 4 weeks or as your doctor instructs.
- ✓ Your surgical incision will be very susceptible to sunburn if exposed to the sun or tanning lights. If you burn your surgical incision, you may have abnormal healing resulting in abnormal or unsightly scarring as well as significant permanent darkening of the scar (hyperpigmentation), making it stand out from the surrounding skin more than usual. For at least 6 months after surgery, keep your incisions covered well when in the sun and/or cover them with sun block. Do not expose your scars to tanning lights.
- ✓ If you feel hot or have chills, check your temperature and if it is greater than 101.5, call the doctor's office.
- ✓ If you have bleeding from your rectum or any of your incisions of more than a half-cup, call the doctor's office.
- ✓ If you experience severe diarrhea, or more than 4-5 stools a day, call the doctor's office.

SOMEONE IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE 24/7 BY CALLING:

- Our office at (602) 993-2622.
- After hours you will reach the doctor through the office line or you can call our answering service directly at (602) 336-4156.

In most cases the doctor will return your call right away; at times it may take up to 60 minutes for you to hear back from us. If you have not heard back from us within 30 minutes call the answering service again. If you have chest pain or another problem that you do not think can wait 30 minutes, head to the nearest emergency room. They will contact us.