



Wisconsin Colon & Rectal Clinic

A DIVISION OF NEW SURGICAL ASSOCIATES, S.C.

Home Care Instructions for Fistula Management

Diet

- After surgery, liquids and a light diet is best tolerated. The day after surgery you may resume a healthy diet.
- Drink at least 2 quarts of liquids daily.

Bowel Movements

- Do not wipe, gently blot anal area or spray off after bowel movements with hand held sprayer in shower or with a spray bottle.
- Do not use any type of steroid or antibiotic ointment/cream to anal area. (Ex: Hydrocortisone, Triple Antibiotic, Preparation H, Tucks)
- Do not insert anything into the anus. (Ex: Thermometers, suppositories, enemas)
- Do not strain or sit on the toilet for more than 5-10 minutes.
- Monitor bowel movements, it is very important not to become constipated. If you do not have a bowel movement 1-2 days after surgery, take Milk of magnesia (2 tablespoons) followed by 16 oz of fluids. Continue to drink liquids until results.
- May repeat Milk of Magnesia if no bowel movement 4-6 hours after first dose.
- **Do not take Milk of Magnesia if you have a history of kidney disease/failure.**
- If you do not have a bowel movement 2 days after taking Milk of Magnesia contact the office.
- If you had a colonoscopy with your surgery, you may not have a bowel movement for up to 3 days. Wait until the 3rd day before following the Milk of Magnesia instructions.
- It is normal to have a small amount of bleeding with bowel movements for the first 2-3 weeks after surgery.

Urination

- If you have trouble urinating after surgery, try urinating while you are in the tub or shower.
- Do not push or strain hard.
- Do not sit longer than 5 minutes on the toilet.
- If you are unable to urinate, please call the office.

Activity/Work

- Following surgery, rest and avoid strenuous activity/heavy lifting.
- Do not plan any events for up to 3 days. (Ex: working, dining out, exercise, sporting events, yard work, house work, etc.)
- Depending upon what type of work you do and your general health, you may return to work 2-3 days after surgery. Discuss you situation with your doctor or nurse.
- Please discuss any work concerns with doctor or staff.
- No lifting greater than 10-20 pounds for the first week after surgery.
- You may resume sexual activity when it is comfortable for you. Do not insert anything into the anus.

(over)

Driving

- No driving the day of surgery or if on narcotic pain medications.
- You may resume driving when you do not have pain with sitting, braking, or turning to check your blind spot.
- You should not be light headed or dizzy while driving.

Wound Care

- To remove dressing for first dressing change, soak in tub until packing is wet and gently tease out to reduce risk of bleeding.
- Soak in warm water for 15-20 minutes twice a day for the first 1-3 weeks after surgery. This will allow the muscles to relax, relieve discomfort, and reduce swelling. Avoid sitz bath toilet inserts.
- Elevate your bottom 4 times daily. Lie on your side or stomach on a bed or couch. For extra lift you may place pillows under your hips. Do this for about 20 minutes. This will reduce swelling and promote comfort. Do this for a minimum of 3 days.
- You may use Vaseline to the skin surrounding the wound but not on the wound or in anus.
- **If a seton drain was placed**, feel for the knot at the end of the seton and gently move it back and forth while you are in the tub. This will help drain the tract. Make sure the knot is kept outside of the fistula tract to decrease discomfort and promote healing. Our staff will explain this process better at your first follow up appointment.
- **The fistulotomy wound** needs to heal from the inside out. After your tub bath or shower, **spread the wound** and place a corner of the gauze between the skin edges to collect drainage and to promote proper healing.
- **Do not sit on a donut shaped cushion.** Sitting on a pillow is ok.
- Do not place ice on wound site.

Medications

- Over the counter pain relievers such as Tylenol or Advil will usually control pain and discomfort. Do not use pain relievers if your primary care provider or another physician has directed you not to use these substances.
- If using narcotics such as Vicodin or have a history of hard stools, it is important to take a stool softener. (Ex. Colace or generic name of ducosate sodium. Take one tablet twice daily.)

Follow up

- Generally you will be seen at the office 5 to 7 days after surgery for follow up. Please call the office to schedule an appointment.

Reasons to call your doctor

- Please call if you are experiencing increasing drainage, pain, or redness of the wound.
- Any concerns regarding bowel movements or urination.
- Fever greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Physicians are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for any concerns.

Please call our office with any questions: (920) 494-9685