



## Post-Operative Instructions: Abdominal Surgery

These instructions provide general guidelines. Your surgeon will give you specific instructions tailored to your procedure. Always follow your surgeon's advice. Contact your surgeon immediately if you have any concerns.

### Immediately After Surgery:

- **Pain Management:** Take prescribed pain medication as directed. Try to use non-opioid medications for pain control. Do not drive while taking pain medication.
- **Wound Care:** Keep the incision site clean and dry. Your surgeon will give specific instructions on dressing changes and showering.
- **Activity:** Rest and avoid strenuous activity as instructed by your surgeon. Get out of bed and walk around as tolerated, but avoid heavy lifting or straining.

### At Home:

- **Diet:** Start with clear liquids (broth, clear juices) and gradually advance to soft foods as tolerated, typically over several days. Avoid gas-producing foods initially. Your surgeon will provide specific dietary recommendations, including how long to maintain a low residue diet.
- **Bowel Movements:** You may experience constipation due to pain medication and decreased activity. Increase fluid and fiber intake. If you do not have a bowel movement within a few days post-surgery, contact your doctor. Avoid straining during bowel movements. Chewing gum for 10 minutes three to four times a day may help stimulate your bowel function.
- **Pain Management:** Continue taking prescribed pain medication as directed, gradually reducing the dosage as pain improves. Report any uncontrolled pain to your surgeon. Use a pillow to support your abdomen when moving or coughing to reduce pain.
- **Wound Care:** Keep the incision site clean and dry. Follow your surgeon's instructions regarding dressings and showering. Report any signs of infection (increased pain, swelling, redness, pus, fever).
- **Incision Care:** Avoid rubbing or scrubbing the incision. Gently pat it dry.
- **Activity:** Gradually increase your activity level as tolerated. Avoid heavy lifting, strenuous activity, and any activities that cause significant pain for several weeks. Include light activity to promote circulation and prevent blood clots. Your surgeon will provide specific instructions.

**Signs of Complications:** Contact your surgeon immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Increased pain at the incision site
- Fever or chills
- Redness, swelling, or pus at the incision site
- Excessive bleeding or drainage from the incision
- Severe abdominal pain or distention
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Difficulty urinating or bowel movements
- Shortness of breath

**Follow-up:**

- Attend all scheduled follow-up appointments with your surgeon.

**Important:** These are general guidelines. Your surgeon's instructions are paramount. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your surgeon's office immediately.