

## HERNIA SURGERY

### What to expect once you are home

Congratulations, your surgery is over and you are doing just fine. But once you home, many symptoms may occur, or questions may arise that you want answers to. Here are the answers to events you can expect and questions that may arise once you at home. Do not hesitate to call us if these symptoms are severe or you feel any concerns.

1. **Dizziness** – This is not unexpected. You had sedation during your surgery, and may have already taken some narcotic pain medication. This may cause waves of dizziness. If so, sit down and rest for a short while. It should gradually subside.
2. **Nausea** – The combination of sedation and pain medication may cause episodes of nausea. Eat lightly if this occurs, mostly liquids. It generally lasts only 6-8 hours, and rarely persists for more than 24 hours.
3. **Incisional Pain** – Although your surgery was done as an outpatient, it is still considered major surgery and pain is to be expected. Your prescription is designed just for this. Take it only as directed, but keep walking. Activity (frequent short walks) for at least 5 minutes or more every hour until bedtime are the key to a shorter, less complicated recovery. The pain and stiffness are most evident in the morning, as the muscles have tightened while asleep. Take your pain medication and resume walking. Your pain will decrease during the day. Each morning is easier than the day before!!!
4. **Swelling/Discoloration** – Swelling and “Black & Blue” changes in the incision are not unusual. This may even spread toward or into the genitalia. Keep ice on the area at least 24 hours after surgery. The swelling will gradually resolve over the next week or so, and is not an indication of a problem. Swelling of the scrotum and genitalia can be quite dramatic in about 5-7% of patients. While this appears alarming, it is temporary and will resolve. Please inform us if you are concerned however.

5. **Numbness** – As with all surgery, slight and temporary numbness in and around the incision is not unusual. This may extend toward the genitalia and into the upper leg. This gradually subsides in most cases and is not problematic.

6. **Bleeding** – A small amount of blood-tinged drainage on the gauze is expected. If it becomes excessive (puddling under the dressing or oozing from the dressing), please let us know.

Later, additional concerns may develop. Here again are some of the occurrences you can reasonably expect.

1. **Healing Ridge** - An area of swelling around the area, and firmness under the incision which develops slowly may be noticeable after the surgery. This is the “Healing Ridge”, or area of tissue ingrowth and healing where the hernia was repaired. This GOOD, and not a problem! It makes our repair strong with infrequent recurrence. Although it may last for many weeks, it does gradually flatten out and soften in this area to a normal contour.

2. **Twinge** – For many months after hernia surgery, an occasional and usually mild twinge of discomfort in the area is not unusual. The area is under stress and flexion during daily activity, and the healing process may become irritated. The full healing process remolds during 4-6 months after surgery and irritation of this process may cause this occasional discomfort. But don't worry, the repair is strong and it's hard for you to damage anything even with normal and recreational activity. Recurrences are extremely rare! So rest a day or so and take any over-the-counter pain medication that you normally might use. Resume your normal activity. Call us if the discomfort lasts more than 2-3 days.

If these or any symptoms are bothersome to you, do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to talk to you again or see you back in the office for evaluation if necessary.

## ACTIVITY AFTER HERNIA SURGERY

### Guidelines

Many of our patients ask, “How much physical activity can I do, and when can I return to work?” These are good and important questions. Some patients have specific needs and these will be discussed individually with you. However, we believe, that for most cases in general, the hernia repair is IMMEDIATELY STRONG, and able to tolerate most normal day to day activity without harming the surgical area. This includes walking (inside and outside, weather permitting), climbing stairs, riding in cars, fixing meals, and even moderate lifting (to about 30-40 lbs.) immediately after surgery.

Mild exercise such as a treadmill or stationary bike (on low resistance, slower than normal pace) can be started on the evening after surgery and such activity, including frequent walking, is actually encouraged. Light swimming (chest deep only please!), jogging, and sports such as golf or tennis can be started after only a few days to a week. The rate of speed and resistance can be gradually increased based on your flexibility and comfort (let the incision “tell you” if you are doing too much---and listen to it!). But activity in general cannot harm this repair. Be SAFE and enjoy your activity.

After 2 weeks most physical activity can be resumed to normal, pre-surgical levels without restrictions. Aggressive contact sports can be resumed in about 3 weeks. Driving can be resumed (licensed drivers only please!) after 2-3 days in most cases (physicians discuss with you) if you are no longer taking the prescription pain reliever, and your flexibility is normal (USE COMMON SENSE AND CAUTION WHEN YOU DRIVE). If you require to perform lifting at this point, you must use PROPER BODY MECHANICS. Although the hernia is strong, poor body mechanics may cause injury to backs, knees, arms, etc. If you are unsure about this, get someone to lift or assist you.

Again, the above are guidelines only, and may patients have specific needs or additional questions. Please feel free to discuss these at any time with your surgeon or our office staff.

WE WILL BE HAPPY TO ASSIST YOU!

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