

## RECOVERY AND POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

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### Diet / Bowel Care

- No restrictions, you may resume your regular diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids (around 2 litres per day).
- Having surgery and narcotic pain medications can cause your bowels to slow down, and can cause constipation. If you are prone to constipation lactulose at 20ml three times a day from your chemist will be fine.

### Medications

- Pain medications
    - The anaesthetist will give you a script for pain killers. Take these as required. Strong pain killers can cause nausea and it may be best to take them with food.
    - Regular paracetamol and anti inflammatories will help manage your pain.
  - Regular prescription medications may be taken as usual, in most cases. Changes to your normal medicines are listed below.
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### General Wound Care

- Keep the dressings clean and dry for first 24 hours (no showering). After 72 hours, you may remove the outer bandages over your incisions and you may shower; wash wounds gently with soap and water and dry carefully; no dressing needed after first 72 hours.
- No soaking in tub or pool for 2 weeks following surgery.
- If you have staples on your incision, they will be removed at your follow up appointment.
- If you have steri-strips (white paper tapes), leave these on until they fall off on their own.
- If you have “skin glue” over the incisions, this will wear off in about one week; do not try to scrub it off.
- You may use ice over the incisions for the first 24 hours (30 minutes on / 30 minutes off) while awake, to help with pain relief.
- Some bruising and soreness is expected around the incisions. Remember we had to cut through the muscles. One to two weeks after surgery, you may notice a firm ridge under the incision. This is normal healing, called the “Healing Ridge,” and it is the scar tissue forming in the several different tissue layers. This will resolve over a few months.

## Activity

- You may resume normal activities as you feel you are able. You should be up walking around your house several times per day after surgery. This improves circulation and helps prevent complications after surgery. Walking outside and doing stairs are acceptable, and you can increase your activity as you can tolerate.
- You may return to work or school as you feel you are ready, with lifting restrictions in mind if you have a labor-intensive job.
- **NO DRIVING FOR 24 HOURS AFTER SURGERY AND WHILE TAKING NARCOTICS.**
- You may drive when you feel that you can safely operate the vehicle (think about turning or stopping suddenly, maybe take a test drive in a safe area first).

## What to Look Out For

- Temperature higher than 38 degrees.
- Any chest pain or difficulty breathing.
- Redness (more than a 1/4 inch around the wound) / drainage / bleeding / or pus from wound(s) or IV sites.
- Increased pain at incisions. Some pain is expected but should get progressively better over about a week.

If any of the above occur, call Great Southern Specialist Centre or present to the Emergency Department at the Albany Hospital (or the ED nearest to you); your surgeon will be informed.