

Going Home After Open Urology Surgery

You're going home after your urology surgery. Here are some things you should know.

Activity

- Don't lift anything over 10 pounds for 6 weeks.
- Don't drive for 2 weeks.
- It is okay to climb stairs and walk.

Your incision

Your incision is closed by staples. Your family doctor can take these out 7-10 days after your surgery. Or you can make an appointment to come to the urology clinic. If you have a home health nurse, she can take them out.

When your staples are taken out, steri-strips will be put across your incision. After the steri-strips have been on about 1 week, they will start to curl up on the edges. Let them fall off by themselves. If they haven't fallen off in 10 days, you can gently take them off.

Bathing

You can shower when you go home. Keep your back to the water, except when rinsing. Tub baths are okay as long as you don't have your incision under water. Dry your incision by patting it gently with a clean towel.

Preventing Problems

Blood clots are a common problem after surgery. You can help prevent this problem by moving your legs often. It is important to get up and walk around often.

Breathing problems can also happen. You will need to take 10 slow, deep breaths every 1 or 2 hours while you are awake. Do this until your activity returns to normal.



Things You May Notice

You may notice these changes after surgery. They are normal. They will go away in about 4 to 6 weeks.

- Tiring easily. When you feel tired, you should rest. However, it is important to increase your activity a little every day until you are back to normal.
- Mood swings.
- Numbness or tingling on the tops and sides of your thighs. This is from your surgery. It will go away.
- Muscle aches and pains. Back aches are very common. These aches and pains may be due to:
 - Your surgery
 - How much time you spend in bed
 - How you get in and out of bed
 - How you stand, sit or walk

This gets better slowly as you get back to your normal activity.

- Weight loss. (Not wanting to eat is common.)
- Pain from gas (until your belly gets back to normal).

Diet

It is most important that you drink enough. Try to drink at least 8 glasses of liquid each day, unless you are on a special fluid limit.

You do not have to follow any special diet at home. Food may not taste the same. You may find that you get full more quickly than you did before surgery. This is normal. Try eating 6 small meals instead of 3 large ones.

Bowel Function

You may be constipated after your surgery. This happens often with belly operations. Decreased activity and prescription pain medicine can also cause constipation. If you are constipated, try:

- Drinking plenty of water.
- Increasing your activity level.
- Taking a stool softener or mild laxative. You can get these without a prescription at any drug store.
- Eating more fiber. Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables and whole grain foods.

When To Call The Doctor

Call your urologist if you have any of these problems:

- Fever greater than 101.5° F or 38.5° C
- Chills
- Increased drainage from your incision
- Increased redness around your incision
- Skin around your incision is hot
- Pain that doesn't improve with pain medicine
- Nausea and vomiting
- Trouble breathing
- Leg pain
- Chest pain

