



Colorectal Surgery Diverticulitis, Colon Cancer, and Colon Polyps

What to expect after hospitalization:

- Be prepared to have a responsible adult drive you home. You may wish to have someone stay with you for the first few days in case you need assistance.
- You may have some bruising, soreness, and swelling around your incision sites. This is normal and will improve over 2 to 3 weeks time.
- Loose stools and more frequent bowel movements are common after bowel surgery. This will improve over the next few months, but may never completely resolve.
- Your surgeon may place you on a low-residual diet for a few weeks after surgery. A low residual diet is low in fiber and will help to rest your intestinal tract while it is healing. You will be given an instructional hand-out with dietary suggestions to help you make appropriate food choices.
- Reduce your physical activity for the first few weeks after surgery. You may walk and do normal day to day activities as long as it does not cause pain. Do not lift, pull, push, or carry anything heavier than 15 pounds for a full 6 weeks from the date of surgery, or until your surgeon clears you to do so. This will allow your incisions to heal as you ease back into your normal activities of daily living. Do not drive while taking pain medication or if your driving skills are affected by post-operative soreness.
- Make sure you have a follow-up appointment with your surgeon 10 to 14 days after surgery. Your pathology results will be discussed at that time. If additional treatment is needed, arrangements will be made for you in the following weeks.
- Sometimes after surgery, the colon may need to be kept clear of stool while it heals. If so, a new opening in the abdomen will be made for wastes to exit the body. This is called an ostomy or colostomy. Your surgeon will tell you if your ostomy is permanent or temporary.
- Drink plenty of clear liquids for at least 2 weeks after surgery. This will help your bowels return to normal functioning, and will help with the healing process.
- Do not take laxatives unless your surgeon has directed you to do so.

Contact our office if:

- You develop a fever greater than 101 degrees or notice bloody, green, or white colored drainage from your incisions.
- If you have a large red area around your incisions.
- If you have a reaction to your medication. Ex. Hives, rash, shortness of breath.
- If your abdomen becomes distended, or you do not have a bowel movement for 3 days.