

Florida Coast Surgical

Darren L. Peterson, MD, FACS

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS—PAGE 1

We wish you well in your recovery and hope the following information will be helpful to you as a general guide, however if you have any specific questions please call our office for more assistance. You are an important member in your health care team and we are counting on your participation in your postoperative care. Please do not view your calls as an inconvenience or bother to us. We want to help make your post operative period as easy as possible.

You must call the office if:

- You have a temperature of greater than 101F
- You are experiencing increasing wound pain, redness, or drainage.
- You are experiencing prolonged nausea and vomiting.
- Significant bleeding from incision.
- Difficulty urinating.

For emergencies call 911 directly. This would include:

- Significant chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Sudden paralysis or loss of sensation
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

Bandages: Keep your bandage in place for 48 hours, after which you may remove the dressing. You may see steri-strips (butterfly tapes) directly over the incision, please leave these in place. You can expect these steri-strips to loosen and separate after 2 weeks; when they become loose, you may remove them yourself. If your incision has any drainage please apply another dressing, on a daily basis, until your wound is dry.

Bathing: After you have removed your bandage, you may take a quick shower and continue to shower daily washing the wound with mild soap and water. If a clear dressing is in place it is water-proof and showering is acceptable immediately. Remove this dressing after 48 hours as instructed above. Please avoid any hot tubs, prolonged baths, and swimming pools for four weeks. Do not swim in the ocean until you have been approved to do so by your surgeon. Following hemorrhoid surgery, have a sitz bath twice per day and after each bowel movement.

Meals/Bowel Activity: Generally, a light diet is recommended after surgery, you may return to your regular diet as your condition improves. Diabetics must be careful to balance their food intake with their diabetic medication. A little bowel irregularity is common after surgery, and a gentle laxative (2 tablespoons of Milk of Magnesia) is acceptable if needed. You may also require a daily stool softener while taking narcotic pain medications. If you have had intestinal or bowel surgery, you must call the office before taking any laxatives or stimulants within the first two weeks after your discharge.

Activity: It is common to feel fatigued after an operation, so do not be surprised if you cannot immediately return to your normal lifestyle. Gentle exercise, such as walking, is beneficial and encouraged in moderation. You may climb stairs at any time you feel comfortable enough to do so, but do not climb stairs if you are, in any way, unsteady on your feet. If your activities are causing you increasing pain, you must stop and rest. The following guidelines may be modified by your surgeon at time of discharge from the hospital, but in general:

- If you have had laparoscopic surgery, please avoid any strenuous activities for 4 weeks; during this time do not lift or carry more than 15lbs.
- If you have had major "open" surgery on the abdomen, then please avoid any heavy lifting or straining (15lbs max) for 6 weeks.
- If you have undergone hernia surgery, please avoid any strenuous activities for six weeks; during this time do not lift or carry more than 15lbs. Specific instructions may be given to you depending on the exact nature of your repair.



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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS—PAGE 2

Driving: You should never drive your car while taking narcotic pain medication! These medications seriously, and adversely, affect your judgment and response times, so please drive responsibly. You should also refrain from driving until you are not hampered by painful movements, in that way you can quickly respond to emergency driving situations. This will generally be two weeks for most major operations.

Medications: Take all your medications as directed at the time of your discharge from the hospital. Use your pain medication as needed to control your pain, and remember, do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking prescription strength pain medication. If you can take them, agents such as Motrin and Aleve can provide excellent pain relief, equal to narcotics, without the sedating side effects. Requests for prescription refills should be called into the office between 9am and 4:30pm Mon-Fri. This is particularly important for pain medications, as after-hour and weekend requests for narcotics may not be granted. While we respect our genuine patients' need for pain medicine, we unfortunately experience many illegal requests during those times frames, so please, call us during regular office hours. When calling for prescription refills please have available the name and telephone number of your pharmacist, this will allow us to give you quicker service.

In most cases, call your family doctor for questions regarding your routine and usual, medications.

Appointments: Please call the office (586-1850) the day after your discharge to arrange for your postoperative visit. Please identify yourself as a post-op patient so that we may accommodate you on our schedules. If you require any tests prior to your visit, please notify our staff when you call, so they can make the appropriate arrangements.

Drains: If you have any drains or tubes when you leave the hospital, please follow the directions you were given before discharge. In general, on a daily basis, write down the amount of drainage present over the previous 24-hour period. Then bring this record for your surgeon to review at your next office visit. It is the amount of drainage in 24 hours that determines when the drain(s) will be removed. Note: failure to do this properly may result in your drain(s) staying in longer than truly necessary.

Visiting Nurse: Occasionally you may require a nurse to visit you at home. This may be to administer medication, or assist you in wound care or to monitor your condition. This is usually arranged prior to your discharge, and you should be contacted by the nursing service within 24 hours of arriving home. If you have not been contacted by the nurse within 48 hours, please call our office for further assistance.

Once again, we are here to serve you during your recovery. One of our surgeons is on call 24 hours a day, every day of the year. After normal office hours your calls will be directed to our answering machine which will directly page the physician with emergencies. Please provide as much information as possible so that we may handle your issue appropriately.



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If you would like more information about your procedure the internet is a great resource. While I advocate patients obtaining more information about their procedures, I strongly suggest that your primary sources be from institutions that are nationally recognized for their expertise in the field of surgery. My suggestion would be the **American College of Surgeons** who has developed a web site entirely dedicated to helping patients research their procedures. I encourage you to visit this website as you prepare for surgery. You may also visit our website which has been developed especially for our patients.

www.facs.org/patienteducation

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