

# **Denver Center for Endocrine Surgery**

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## **Instructions after Abdominal Surgery**

### **WOUND CARE AND RECOVERY**

- If you have Steri-Strips (tape strips) or Dermabond (clear glue) these should stay ON until they fall off (2 weeks).
- If you have staples, they will need to be removed in the clinic.
- You may shower with soap and water and pat the wound dry. **DO NOT SOAK IN A TUB** until cleared by your surgeon.
- Do not use any ointments unless instructed by your surgeon.
- Moderate bruising, swelling and tenderness are normal.

### **DIET AND CONSTIPATION**

- Your appetite may be decreased for a week or more. If you are not tolerating regular meals, try to eat small amounts or drink water or Gatorade every 2 - 3 hours.
- Drink enough water to stay hydrated. Avoid carbonated drinks (soda).
- Your intestines may not return to normal for several weeks. You may have diarrhea and/or constipation.
- To avoid constipation, drink plenty of water (8 – 10 glasses per day).
- If needed, you can take a stool softener or mild laxative (e.g., Milk of Magnesia or Miralax) once or twice per day with a glass of hot liquid (tea, coffee, etc.).

### **PAIN MANAGEMENT AND MEDICATIONS**

- Take your pain medication as prescribed.
- Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) or naproxen (Aleve) may also be taken as directed.
- **DO NOT DRIVE** while using prescription pain medication.
- **DO NOT DRIVE OR MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS** for 24 hours after anesthesia or while taking prescription pain medications.

### **ACTIVITY AND FOLLOWUP**

- Avoid heavy lifting and sports until cleared by your surgeon.
- Take deep breaths and cough to prevent pneumonia. Splint (hug your abdomen) when coughing or sneezing.
- You should walk 5 - 10 minutes every hour that you are awake.
- **Follow-up with your surgeon:**

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### **WHEN TO CALL THE SURGEON'S OFFICE:**

Fever higher than 101 degrees.

Redness or drainage of pus or bad-smelling liquid from the wound.

Trouble passing urine (unable to “go”, pain, or burning).

Excessive swelling, bruising, pain, vomiting and/or severe diarrhea.