



## Laparoscopic Umbilical/Incisional/Ventral Hernia Post-op Instructions

### Post-Op To-Do List:

- Take Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen tablets every 6 hours together for 2-5 days
- Do not do anything strenuous for 2 weeks after surgery
- Please review the post op instructions below if you have questions
- If you have a plastic bandage over your wound, please remove this in 48 hours after surgery. You will have steristrips on the wound under this and these can be removed in 2 weeks if they haven't already fallen off.

### Pain

Soreness, pain throughout the abdomen after surgery is normal. It can occur away from the hernia itself as the mesh extends and is tacked in place beyond the area of the hernia. Pain will be worse with movement, changing positions from laying to seated to standing. Male patients may notice new pain in the testicle after surgery. This is normal and will go away over time.

Most of our patients take only tylenol and ibuprofen for pain management after surgery. We recommend taking the following every 6 hours for the first few days after surgery as needed:

- 650mg to 1g of acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- 400mg to 600mg of ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin)

If you are experiencing significant pain that is preventing you from going on a walk or falling asleep, please call the office for a prescription for oxycodone. This medication will cause constipation, so we recommend the following:

- Fiber supplement (Citrucel or Benefiber)
- Stool softener (Colace, Senakot)
- Laxative only if unable to have a bowel movement for a few days (Milk of Magnesia)

### Incisions

The incisions are closed with dissolvable sutures - these do not need to be removed.

Surgical glue is used to cover the incisions - this should peel off on its own in the next week or two. Please do not pick at it until it is peeling at the edges. If there is any bloody drainage from the wound it's ok to cover it with a bandage to protect your clothing.

In some circumstances, a waterproof bandage is used instead of glue. In this case, please remove the bandage in 48 hours and leave the underlying steristrips in place. You can remove these after 2 weeks if they have not already fallen off.

Your incisions will become hard about 7-10 days after surgery. This is due to scar tissue, and is a normal part of healing.

## **Bathing**

You may shower at any time after surgery. There is waterproof surgical glue or a waterproof bandage over your incisions. You do not need to cover this. In the circumstance where you have a bandage, you can continue to shower after you remove your bandage.

Please avoid baths, hot tubs, pools, or soaking in water for 2 weeks after surgery, as this can increase your risk of an infection.

## **Activity**

Following surgery, you are encouraged to do as much walking as is comfortable. You may climb stairs, taking them one at a time and slowly. We recommend walking at a leisurely pace for the first 2 weeks.

Avoid exercise, strenuous activity, lifting over 25lbs, and repetitive actions for 2 weeks after surgery. After 2 weeks, you may slowly resume these activities, but do so slowly and progressively, and listen to your body if it is telling you to stop or slow down.

You may drive 24 hours after surgery if you feel up to it, as long as you are not taking any prescription pain medications. We typically recommend you avoid driving for 48-72 hours unless necessary.

## **Precautions**

Although not commonly seen, any incision is susceptible to infection. If you develop a fever of 101 degrees or above, have unexpected pain, redness or drainage from the incision, please contact our office.

Your pain and swelling should gradually improve after the second or third postoperative day. If you have new, constant pain after feeling good for a couple of days, please contact our office.

## **Follow-up**

You will have a postoperative appointment scheduled for somewhere between 2 and 4 weeks after surgery. If this has not been scheduled yet, or if you need to reschedule, please contact our office.

## **Hernia recovery during cold and flu season**

The winter months bring lots of colds and sometimes the flu. If you find yourself needing to cough or sneeze, it's often helpful to place a pillow or your hand over your incisions. This provides some support and comfort, and will hopefully decrease your pain when you cough or sneeze. Sharp pain is not uncommon after a cough or sneeze, and lingering effects should resolve in a day or two. It's very unlikely that the hernia will return as a result of this.

## **Post-op FAQ:**

Below are questions that patients often ask us before and after surgery. This was created to help you better prepare for the day of surgery and for recovery. While these answers do not substitute for an appointment with us, they are created to help you remember what may have been said in the office during your consultation.

### **Will I be able to walk after surgery?**

Yes. We want everyone to walk after surgery.

### **When can I shower after surgery?**

You may shower the day after surgery. Your surgical glue is waterproof and does not need to be covered. If you have a bandage in place, this is also waterproof and should be removed in 48 hours when you can continue showering normally.

### **Why does my stomach look more bloated or full?**

The combination of abdominal surgery and medications that you received during surgery slow down the intestine. This causes fluid and gas to build up in the abdomen which you will notice for the first few days after surgery. Be sure to drink fluids, take stool softeners if you are on prescription pain medications. The fullness will slowly go away during the first week after surgery and will be completely gone after 2-3 weeks in most people.

### **When should I take my dressing off?**

Your surgical glue will fall off on its own within 2-3 weeks. If it is peeling up at the edges and seems to peel off easily, you may pull the glue off. Please do not pick at it before this time.

### **Can I put a bandaid over the wound?**

Sure. Some people find that a bandaid feels better. Sometimes a bandaid can help keep your clothes clean in the small chance a few drops of blood seep from under the glue or sterstrips.

**Can I go up steps after my hernia surgery?**

Yes. Please take steps slowly and one at a time.

**Can I lift a gallon of milk?**

Yes, as long as it's once or twice! You may lift up to 25 lbs as long as you are not performing many repetitive motions the first two weeks.

**Can I bend down to tie my shoes after surgery?**

Yes, just move slowly.

**When can I drive after surgery?**

You CAN'T drive if taking the prescription opioids. We suggest waiting 24 full hours after your last dose of prescription pain medication before you drive. If you have not taken prescription medication or finished them, you may drive if you feel that you are able to.

**Can I go for a long walk after hernia surgery?**

Yes, we encourage it. Just avoid strenuous hiking trails and don't wear a backpack.

**When can I go for a run after surgery?**

You can go for a run two weeks after hernia surgery.

**When can I resume sexual activity?**

You may resume sexual activity two weeks after hernia surgery.

**When can I go back to work after hernia surgery?**

You may go to work whenever you feel like, as long as your job does not require heavy lifting. Approximately 75% of our patients go to work within 3 days of surgery.

**When can I go back to the gym?**

You may return to the gym two weeks after surgery. Please use common sense and resume activity gradually.

**How much pain will I have after surgery?**

Everyone is different! Some pain, of course, is expected. Most of our patients feel that Tylenol and Motrin are strong enough to take care of their pain.

**How likely is the hernia to come back after surgery?**

The chance that an umbilical hernia comes back is 5-10%. The chance that a ventral hernia comes back is less than 20%.

**How should I resume activity after hernia surgery?**

We recommend that after 2 weeks you slowly resume all of your normal activity and exercises. This will differ from person to person. Start at about 50% of your normal exercise, and

progressively increase this over a 1-2 week period of time. We typically recommend starting with aerobic exercises first (running, biking, hiking) before moving to strengthening exercises.

As long as you progress over time and listen to your body on when to slow down, you will not damage the repair

**I have a low grade fever - should I be worried?**

A low grade fever is normal after having anesthesia. This is defined as a temperature less than 101F and should resolve within 24 to 48 hours. Please call the office if you have a fever greater than 101F or if it persists longer than 48 hours.

Call the office if you have questions or concerns about your recovery: (617) 466-3373  
If you are unable to reach your surgeon, please call the hospital at 617-243-6000 and ask the operator to page or connect you to your surgeon