
Discharge Instructions for Laparoscopic Nissen Fundoplication

Laparoscopic Nissen fundoplication is done to treat gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). GERD happens when food or stomach acid backs up (refluxes) from your stomach into your esophagus. This reflux can damage your esophagus. For the procedure, a few small cuts (incisions) were made in your belly. Working through these incisions, the surgeon wrapped the upper part of your stomach around the esophagus. This creates pressure on the esophagus, helping hold it closed. The pressure helps prevent food and stomach acid from refluxing.

After surgery

You will likely stay in the hospital for 1 or more nights. Once you return home, follow the instructions below and any others you are given.

Activity

Here are suggestions for what you can and can't do as you recover from surgery:

- You will likely want to take it easy for 3 to 5 days. You can go back to your normal daily routine when you are feeling well enough. When you can return to work depends on what type of work you do. Check with your surgeon.
- You can do light activity at home. But don't do any heavy lifting or strenuous exercise for a period of time advised by your surgeon.
- Walk as often as you feel able. This will help with your recovery.
- Don't drive while you are still taking opioid pain medicine. Drive when you are sure you can hit the brake pedal without wincing or hesitating.
- Continue the coughing and deep breathing exercises that you learned in the hospital.

Bandage and incision care

Your incisions will be covered by plastic bandages or strips of tape:

- Don't get the bandage or wound wet for 48 hours or as advised by your surgeon.
- You can remove plastic bandages in 48 hours or as advised by your surgeon. If strips of tape were used to close your incisions, don't pull them off. Let them fall off on their own.
- Once you can get the incision wet, very gently wash your incisions with mild soap and water. Pat them dry. Don't use oils, powders, or lotions on your incisions.

Medicine use

Take all prescribed medicines as directed:

- Until you can swallow easily, take liquid medicines. If you are given pills, crush them and swallow them with liquids. Some pills can't or shouldn't be crushed, so check with your healthcare provider or pharmacist before crushing pills.
- If you are given pain medicine, take it on time as directed. Don't wait for pain to be severe before you take it.
- If you are prescribed antibiotics to fight or prevent infection, take all the medicine until it is gone.
- If you have been on medicines to prevent reflux, ask your healthcare provider if you should stop taking them.

Eating and drinking

At first, swallowing will be hard. This will improve as you recover. You may also have belly bloating and pain, as you won't be able to belch for a time after surgery. Follow any guidelines your healthcare provider gives you for what to eat and what to stay away from during your recovery:

- Follow a liquid diet as advised. Add solid foods back into your diet as you can handle them and as advised by your healthcare provider.
- Don't drink iced, hot, or fizzy beverages. Don't drink through straws. This is to help prevent mild pain in your belly. Ask your healthcare provider what foods you can eat and drink right after your surgery.
- Take small bites and chew your food well. Always swallow the last bite before taking another. Sip water with your meals to help with swallowing.
- Don't eat foods that stick together. These include peanut butter, bread products, and dry meats. They can be tough to swallow.
- Limit foods that produce gas. These include tomato products, fatty or spicy foods, caffeine, alcohol, onions, green peppers, beans, nuts, and raw fruits and vegetables.
- Sit up straight while eating. Stay upright for at least 20 minutes after a meal.
- If eating makes you feel bloated, try several small meals a day instead of 3 large meals.

Keep follow-up appointments

Keep your follow-up appointments. These allow your healthcare provider to check your progress and make sure you're healing well. During office visits, tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms or any reflux. Ask any questions you have.

Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have chest pain or trouble breathing.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:

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- Reflux symptoms that continue or return
 - A large amount of belly swelling or pain, especially pain after coughing
 - Bleeding
 - Belly that becomes sore or feels hard
 - Increased redness or drainage of the incision
 - Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as advised by your healthcare provider
 - Chills
 - Inability to drink or eat
 - Bowel movements that are black or bloody
 - Pain or soreness in your legs