
Discharge Instructions for Open Hernia Repair

You had a procedure called open hernia repair. A hernia is a tear or weakness in the wall of the belly. It causes internal organs to protrude through the wall of muscle or tissue that normally holds it in place. You may be born with this weakness. Or it can be caused by the wear and tear of daily living. Hernias may get worse with time or with physical stress. But surgery can help fix the weakness and stop symptoms.

Activity after surgery

This advice will help in your recovery:

- After surgery, take it easy for the rest of the day. If you had general anesthesia, don't use machinery or power tools, drink alcohol, or make any big decisions for at least the first 24 hours.
- Don't drive while you are still taking opioid pain medicine. Also don't drive until you are able to step firmly on the brake pedal without hesitation.
- Ask others to help with chores and errands while you recover.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 10 pounds until your health care provider says it's okay.
- Don't mow the lawn, use a vacuum cleaner, or do other strenuous activities until your provider says it's okay.
- Walk as often as you feel able.
- Continue the coughing and deep breathing exercises that you learned in the hospital.
- Ask your provider when you can expect to go back to work.
- Prevent constipation:
 - Eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
 - Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day, unless told otherwise.
 - Use a laxative or a mild stool softener as instructed by your provider.

Bandage and incision care

Follow these tips:

- Don't get the bandage or wound wet for 48 hours.
- If strips of tape were used to close your incision, don't pull them off. Let them fall off on their own.
- Take off any gauze bandage in 48 hours.

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- Wash your incision with mild soap and water. Pat it dry. Don't use oils, powders, or lotions on your incision. Don't soak your incision or take tub baths until your health care provider says it's okay.

Follow-up care

Keep follow-up visits during your recovery. These let your health care provider check your progress and make sure you're healing well. You may also need to have your stitches, staples, or bandage removed. During office visits, tell your provider if you have any new symptoms. And be sure to ask any questions you have.

When to call your doctor

Contact your health care provider right away if you have:

- A large amount of swelling or bruising (some testicular swelling and bruising is common).
- Bleeding.
- Increasing pain.
- Increased redness or drainage of the incision.
- A fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your provider.
- Chills.
- Trouble urinating.
- Persistent nausea or vomiting.
- A persistent cough.
- Leg swelling.

Call 911 if you have any chest pain, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing.