

Frequently Asked Questions after Anal and Rectal Surgery

What is ambulatory surgery?

You have been scheduled for ambulatory surgery otherwise called day surgery. This means that you arrive at the hospital on the day of the surgery, are taken to the operating room and leave the hospital the same day. The advantages of day surgery to the patients are it is more convenient for the patient to be in their own bed, using their own bathroom and living in familiar surroundings.

Is it a very painful procedure?

Most anorectal procedures are done under general anesthesia; in addition a local anesthetic is also used. You will have very little or no pain until several hours after surgery till the local anesthetic wears off. We recommend using an ice pack for 6-8 hours after surgery. This may minimize the pain and swelling.

Can I drive home after surgery?

No. You need a responsible adult family member or a friend to drive you back. You cannot take a taxi.

What pain medications do I use after surgery?

We commonly use two types of pain medications after surgery, Percocet and Toradol, unless you are allergic to those. Percocet is a narcotic, and you can take 1-2 tablets every 4 hours as needed. Toradol is a non steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, and you take 1 tablet every 6 hours on a scheduled basis for 5days. Do not take aspirin or aspirin containing products, Plavix or any blood thinners for 10-14 days.

What is Sitz bath?

Sitz bath refers to soaking your bottom in a tub of warm water. You do that for 10-15 minutes 3-4 times a day and after every bowel movement. In addition to keeping the area clean, it relieves the pain by relaxing the muscles in that area. We recommend that you avoid using soap around that area as it may cause itching. No ointments are needed for the wounds.

What kind of dressings do I need?

Keep dry gauze between the buttocks in the anal area. This protects your underclothes and keeps the irritating drainage off your skin.

What can I eat?

There are no restrictions. A diet rich in fiber and drinking 6-8 glasses of water is recommended.

What restrictions in physical activity do I have to follow?

There are no restrictions, however avoid lifting heavy weights and involving in strenuous activity for 2 weeks after surgery.

I feel a loose stitch, what should I do?

You have absorbable stitches; they are expected to dissolve on their own. If you have a loose stitch gently snip it off with a scissors. Do not pull on the stitch.

Is bleeding expected after surgery?

Some bleeding and mucus drainage is normal after surgery. Do not take aspirin containing products for 2 weeks after the surgery. Place dry gauze over the anal area between the buttocks and use an ice pack. Additional protection includes a sanitary pad to avoid staining of the clothing. Bleeding usually occurs with bowel movements, vigorous wiping, and excessive activity. If you feel that you have excessive amount of bleeding, call our office for immediate assistance or report to the emergency room.

How do I clean the wound?

Sitting in a tub of warm water for 10-15 minutes, 3-4 times a day keeps the area clean. Use a moistened toilet paper to dab the area clean. Do not rub with a wash cloth.

I feel that my hemorrhoids are back! What do I do?

Swelling after surgery is common and many patients interpret it as hemorrhoids. The swelling usually resolves over time.

How long should pain last after surgery and when can I return to work?

Pain may last for a few days to a week or two. You may not be able to return to work for a week. Depending on the type of your job, you may be able to return to work after a week. You may discuss with your physician regarding return to work on your follow-up visit.

How do I get my prescription refilled?

Please contact our office during regular business hours for prescription refill.

What do I do for constipation after surgery?

It may be normal to not have a bowel movement in the first day or two. You may have bloating, abdominal cramps with constipation. Patients find fiber supplements such as Konsyl, Metamucil, or Citrucel, 1 tablespoon, once or twice daily helpful in this regard. You may take 1 ounce of Milk of Magnesia if necessary, if you do not have a bowel movement. Over the counter stool softener such as Colace may be used. Drink 8-10 glasses of non-carbonated, caffeine free drinks or water per day. Do not be afraid to the adequate amount of straining to have a bowel movement.

Can I use rectal suppositories or enemas?

Avoid rectal suppositories or enemas after surgery. You may use an enema after two or three days. It has to be done gently using a lubricated tip. You may use 1-2 pints of plain warm tap water.

I have a lot of pain in spite of the pain medication. What do I do?

Generally sitting in a tub of warm water for 10-15 minutes several times a day relieves pain to a significant degree by relaxing the muscles. If this does not work you may call your doctor.

I am not able to urinate. What do I do?

Due to postoperative swelling and the pain causing the spasm of the muscles you may have difficulty urinating. Sitting in a tub of warm water may decrease the swelling and relax the muscles and may allow you to urinate. It is okay to urinate in the tub. Listening to the flow of running water may allow some patients to urinate. If these measures fail, call our office. Some patients may need to have a catheter for a few days till the swelling resolves.

Am I supposed to feel that the anus has closed?

It is a common complaint and may feel that way from spasm and swelling around the anus. Sitz bath helps and you will still be able to have bowel movements.

Can I exercise?

Strenuous exercise, pushing, straining or heavy lifting is to be avoided for at least 4 weeks.

Can I drive?

One can drive when comfortable but prolonged driving is to be avoided.

When do I have to follow up?

You will be seen in office one to two weeks and at four weeks after surgery. Call the office for an earlier appointment, if you have excessive pain or fever.