

## **Colectomy: Your recovery and what to expect at home.**

The course of your recovery will depend on many factors. The following instructions will help guide your recovery and answer many of the most common questions. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please call my office at 702-258-7788.

### **Wound Care**

Your incision should remain dry and covered for 48hrs after surgery. At that time, you may remove any outer bandages to shower, taking care to wash around the incisions. If you have steri-strips (white tape-like coverings), leave them in place. They will typically fall off on their own in 1-2 weeks. If you have staples, you may feel more comfortable putting a light bandage back over your incision after you have showered. You may re-cover your incision if your clothing rubs uncomfortably, if you have an open wound or any drainage coming from the incision. Otherwise, leave it open to air and keep it as clean and dry as possible.

You may submerge your incisions in water –pools, bathtubs, etc. – 2 weeks after surgery.

### **YOUR DIET:**

- A soft diet is recommended within the first 2 weeks after surgery. This would consist of foods like: white rice, bananas, mangos, applesauce, mashed potatoes, broth, soft cooked vegetables, scrambled eggs and small amounts of tenderly cooked fish and poultry.
- Foods to avoid: Whole-grain breads/cereals, gas-forming vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower), raw fruits and vegetables, and any other fried, greasy or fatty foods. Eating several small meals and drinking lots of fluids throughout the day will aide in digestion and promote regular bowel movements.

### **ACTIVITIES AND LIFESTYLE:**

Avoid heavy lifting (no more than about 15 pounds) for 6 weeks.

Most patients should not drive for 2 weeks after surgery and NEVER while taking narcotic pain medication.

- Most colon patients are able to return to work within 4-6 weeks post operatively. **Please contact my medical assistant if you need: FMLA/disability forms completed, a work release or have ANY other questions related to your post operative recovery period.** 702-258-7788

### **YOUR MEDICATIONS:**

Take pain medicines exactly as directed.

Use Ibuprofen (Motrin), Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ice to treat the pain from surgery. Only use narcotic pain medication if this doesn't work. After the first few days, most patients do well with just a combination of ibuprofen (Motrin) and acetaminophen (Tylenol), and can stop the narcotic pain medication. Read and follow all instructions on the label.

Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol, including many prescription narcotics. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful. Do not take more than 4000 mg of acetaminophen within 24 hours.

**Stop the narcotic pain medicine as soon as possible. It causes many side effects including constipation and nausea. Be sure to drink plenty of water and take stool softeners as directed to help avoid opioid-induced constipation.**

If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:

Take your medicine after meals.

Ask your doctor for a different pain medicine.

**SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:**

You have a continued fever >101.5

Your pain gets worse or is not helped by medicine.

You have frequent nausea or vomiting.

You have continued abdominal bloating.

You have expanding redness or swelling at any incision site.

You have foul-smelling drainage from any incision site.

You experience excessive diarrhea (more than 5-6 times per day)

**CALL 911 ANYTIME YOU THINK YOU MAY NEED EMERGENCY CARE. FOR EXAMPLE, CALL IF YOU EXPERIENCE:**

- Trouble breathing.
- Severe belly pain.
- A loss of consciousness
- Sudden chest pain.

**Enhanced Recovery After Surgery**

You are well on your way through enhanced recovery after surgery, but it is not over. You can participate in your “enhanced recovery” at home, in order to have fewer complications, by remembering the importance of:

*Good hygiene* - Brush and floss your teeth, and use mouthwash twice a day. This will continue to reduce the risk of infections.

*Smoking cessation*- Smoking is known to slow the healing process and can increase your risk for surgical complications. Do not smoke and avoid second hand smoke.

*Deep breathing*- At home, continue to exercise your lungs with the Incentive Spirometer (IS) for 2 weeks. It will *reduce* the risk of pneumonia.

*Walking* - Many pneumonias and complications are prevented by getting out of bed and walking 20minutes per day. Continue to increase the frequency and distance you walk each day.

Regards,

Jimmy Xu, M.D.

Las Vegas Surgical

8930 W. Sunset Rd., Suite 300

Las Vegas, NV 89148

702-258-7788