



THE STERNBERG CLINIC

surgeons who listen

2100 Webster St, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94115
Tel: 415.417.3377
Fax: 415.851.4455

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING

ANORECTAL SURGERY

PREPARE FOR YOUR UPCOMING SURGERY:

- Consider purchasing before your surgery date:
 - Gauze, absorbent pads, or liners (NOTHING NEEDS TO BE STERILE)
 - Balneol for cleansing after a BM
 - A fiber supplement – I recommend Konsyl
 - A tube of Calmoseptine or Desitin
 - A bottle of Milk of Magnesia (if you're concerned about post-operative constipation).

GENERAL INFORMATION AND DIET:

- Some nausea on the day of your surgery is common. Drink plenty of fluids and eat lightly. Bland food is usually best at first. Avoid heavy, spicy, greasy, or large meals on the day of surgery.
- Do not drive, operate machinery, or make important decisions for the day of surgery or while taking narcotic pain medications.
- You may return to school or work when you feel comfortable and can sit. This usually is in 1 to 5 days, depending on the extent of your procedure.

ACTIVITY:

- Take it easy for the remainder of the day. Starting tomorrow you may gradually resume your usual activities. **If it hurts, don't do it!**
- Avoid strenuous activity for several days or until most pain and bleeding has stopped. If you're not having much discomfort it's safe to start to exercise.

BOWEL MOVEMENTS:

- You should move your bowels every day after surgery.
- Don't worry. It won't be particularly painful and will actually make you feel better.
- Using wet wipes or Balneol (better), a perianal cleansing lotion that is applied to toilet paper is helpful for cleaning after a BM. Showering after a BM is also an easy way to clean.
- Try and keep the anal area dry after you clean. Blotting with a soft towel and using a hairdryer on a low setting is helpful.
- If your perianal skin becomes irritated please apply Desitin or Calmoseptine (over the counter skin protectants).
- You may pass a small amount of blood or mucus with bowel movements for the several weeks.

- Seepage of blood or mucus between BMs is common. You also may see some blood in the toilet or mixed with your stool for several weeks. This is normal.
- Wear a pad or a piece of gauze in your underwear to protect your cloths. If bleeding is profuse (several bloody BMs in a short period of time) call Dr. Sternberg's office.
- Avoiding **constipated**, hard BMs is super important! A daily fiber supplement is useful to promote soft, daily BMs. Konsyl (the best - 2 tsp. at dinner time), Metamucil, Citracel, or Benefiber are useful fiber supplements. They work by absorbing water to increase stool bulk, so drink plenty of water to allow the fiber to work. It's OK to take a fiber supplement in addition to a prescribed stool softener.
- If you go 1-2 days without a BM, please take a non-prescription laxative such as Milk of Magnesia (2 tbsp every 6 hours until you have a BM).

PAIN CONTROL:

- You are encouraged to soak in a tub of warm plain water 2-3 times a day and after bowel movements.
- For additional pain relief, you may place an ice pack on your bottom.
- For the first few days after surgery take your prescribed pain medication 30 minutes prior to a planned BM.
- You will be prescribed a narcotic (OXYCODONE OR HYDROCODONE) and likely a NSAID (ibuprofen). It is safe to take them together as prescribed. Narcotics and NSAIDS should be taken with food to avoid **nausea**. Avoid Tylenol/acetaminophen as your prescribed narcotic already contains this medication. Taking more may be dangerous! If you have only mild pain, and are not requiring narcotics, then it is safe to take Tylenol alone.
- If you had a larger procedure, you may be prescribed Valium. It's very effective for sleep and relaxation. It's safe to take with the other medications.
- **ALL PAIN MEDICATIONS CAN CAUSE NAUSEA** SO DON'T TAKE EITHER ON AN EMPTY STOMACH AND HOLD THE MEDICATION FOR 6-12 HOURS IF YOU BECOME NAUSEATED.
- Don't sit on a "doughnut" cushion. It actually increases the pressure on your operative site.
- Placing an ice pack on your anal area (a package of frozen peas works great) and alternating this with soaking in a warm tub is often more effective than pain medication. It also has no side effects!

DRESSINGS:

- Any dressing placed over your anus at the time of surgery (even if taped) is there to absorb fluid and protect your clothing. You should remove it prior to soaking in a tub or showering.
- Wear a pad or place a piece of gauze in your underwear to protect your clothing until all discharge stops. Tight fitting underwear is best for keeping a protective absorbent dressing in place.
- Sometimes, a piece of absorbent cotton like material is purposeless left in the anal canal to absorb blood. It will dissolve or pass when you have your first BM. Please don't try and manually remove it.

URINATION:

- Surgery in the anal region can inhibit one's ability to urinate. Avoid drinking large amounts of fluid until you are able to pass urine easily. If you are having difficulty urinating, try and relax and soak in a warm tub and try and urinate in the tub. If you have a tremendous urge to urinate or are unable to for >8 hours, or if you are passing very frequent small amounts of urine please go to your closest **emergency room.**

CALL MY OFFICE PROMPTLY IF YOU:

- Develop a temperature greater than 101 degree Fahrenheit.
- Experience intolerable pain, swelling or bleeding.
- Are unable to move your bowels for 2 days despite using Milk of Magnesia (as recommended above).
- Are unable to tolerate liquids within 8 hours of the procedure.
- Have intractable nausea and vomiting.

Please call the office for an appointment in 2 weeks.

If you require immediate medical attention and are unable to contact Dr. Sternberg, please go to the emergency room at California pacific medical center at 1101 Van Ness Ave or your nearest emergency room. If you have any questions, please call my office at 415.417.3377 or during office hours: Monday – Friday