

## Home Care after Prostate Surgery

This factsheet gives information to help you recover from your prostate surgery.

If you have questions, contact us through your MyChart account or call: \_\_\_\_\_.

### When to Call for Help

Call right away, or go to your local emergency department if you have:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- Shortness of breath or chest pain.
- Swelling or pain in your legs.
- Persistent nausea or vomiting, or if you can't eat or drink.
- Blood clots in your urine larger than the size of a dime or bloody urine that you can't see through.
- If your catheter stops draining or you cannot urinate after we remove your catheter.
- Redness or tenderness that spreads more than ½ inch away from your wound.
- Drainage that lasts longer than 3 days after you get home, smells bad, or looks like pus.
- A sudden rash on your skin.

### What to Expect

Healing from surgery takes time. You should expect to see progress each day, but it will be slow. It will take a few months for you to get back to all of your regular activities.

Stitches will dissolve on their own over a few weeks.

The steri-strips will also fall off on their own.

You may have some pain after surgery. We will prescribe medications to help with this.

Your urine will have blood clots or a slight red color to it. You may have times when blood or urine leaks around your catheter. This is normal and may be a bladder spasm. You can take the medications provided to help.

### Medicines

You will leave the hospital with the following medicines.

- Pain Medicine: \_\_\_\_\_
- Oxybutynin for Bladder Spasms
- Stool Softener/Laxative
- Bacitracin
- Antibiotic
- Sildenafil

Talk with your doctor before taking your regular medicines.

### What to Avoid

Avoid the following activities until your medical team clears you:

- Lifting over 10 pounds (4.5 kg) or doing strenuous activity.
- Driving or operating machinery.
- Straddling activities such as riding a horse, bike, or lawnmower.
- Any sexual activity.
- Removing your steri-strips or adding lotions or ointments to your wound.
- Kegel exercises – Wait until we remove your catheter to resume your Kegel exercises.
- Pulling on the catheter. Keep it secure to your thigh.

### What You Need to Do

To help with your healing process, you will need to do the following:

#### Stay Hydrated

You will have a goal of drinking 2 liters (8 cups) of fluids each day. These can include water, sports drinks, juices, soups, broths, and popsicles. You can drink soda, coffee or tea, but these do not count toward your goal. Maintaining good hydration helps keep your catheter from getting blocked.

While you heal, staying hydrated is more important than eating solid foods.

## Get Up and Walk

As soon as you get home from the hospital, begin taking short walks every hour you are awake. Walks include standing up and walking around your home for about 1 minute. If you use the stairs, use caution and take one step at a time.

Walking helps prevent blood clots that can cause serious problems including death.

## Gradually Resume Your Normal Diet

Your doctor may give you specific instructions on going back to your usual diet. In general, follow these steps:

Stay on a liquid diet until you begin regularly passing gas.

Begin eating soft, bland foods such as rice, bananas, applesauce, toast, or Cream of Wheat.

Once you begin having regular bowel movements, you can start adding your regular food. Wait to eat meat, dairy and raw vegetables until you have adjusted to other foods you typically eat.

If you become constipated, take the stool softener or laxative included in your medicines list. You should return to your liquid or bland diet until your constipation improves.

## Manage Pain

You will have a narcotic medicine to manage your pain. As soon as you get home, begin alternating between acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and the narcotic. Do not take more than 3,000 mg of acetaminophen in a 24-hour period.

Once your urine becomes clear and yellow you can begin taking ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®). Take 800 mg every 8 hours.

Narcotics cause constipation. The sooner you transition from the narcotic to over-the-counter medicines, the sooner you will have regular bowel movements and can resume your typical diet.

## Traveling

If you will be traveling home from the hospital or traveling a long distance while healing, you have an extra risk of getting a clot. Taking steps to prevent a clot is especially important during car or airplane trips.

To prevent clotting, do the following:

- Every hour, stretch your legs and walk for a few minutes.
- Elevate your legs as much as possible.
- Do exercises to help stretch your legs. These include:
  - While sitting, keep heels on floor while raising toes up and down.
  - Sit and keep toes on the floor while raising heels up and down.
  - Stand and raise one knee to your waist. Lower your knee and then repeat with the other leg.
  - Stand and raise yourself up and down on your toes.

## Manage Side Effects

**Bladder spasms.** Bladder spasms can cause leaking around the catheter, a sudden urge to urinate, pain in your stomach area, or pain at the tip of your penis.

Oxybutynin can help if you have problems with bladder spasms. Take one tablet every 8 hours as you need to. Do not take oxybutynin 24 hours before we remove your catheter.

**Swelling of penis and testicles.** You may have some swelling, bruising and tenderness in your penis and testicles.

Steps that will help:

- Wear underwear that gives support. Wear briefs instead of boxers.
- While sitting or lying down, place a rolled hand towel under the testicles to elevate them.
- Use ice packs. Place a thin towel between the ice pack and your skin. Bags of frozen vegetables can serve as ice packs.

**Constipation.** It takes a few days for you to resume your regular bowel habits. It may take up to 3 days to have a bowel movement. Follow these steps to help with constipation.

- Do not bear down. It is best to manage your bowel movements with a stool softener.
- Take a laxative, stool softener, or warm prune juice. Do not use a suppository. Only take stool softeners or laxatives by mouth.
- Drink lots of fluids and walk frequently throughout the day.
- Your narcotic pain medicine may be causing your constipation. Try to use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) to manage your pain.

### **Care for Your Catheter**

Caring for your catheter makes a big difference in your healing process. See the factsheet *Urinary Catheter Care and Infection Control*.