

Postoperative Instructions – Rectal Surgery

For questions or problems, call our 24 hour office number:

949-499-4565

For emergencies, call 911.

Expect a moderate amount of pain for the first few days. Serious postoperative bleeding is rare, but some oozing is natural and significant bleeding may occur. The instructions below will help to minimize problems with recovery.

1. Long-acting local anesthetic is injected under the surgical site at the completion of the procedure. This will help keep early post-op pain under control. The effect will wear off after four to five hours and some increase in pain at that time is normal. A prescription for pain tablets will be provided at discharge. This should be filled on the way home even if pain is minimal, as an increase in discomfort is to be expected as the local anesthetic effect disappears.
2. A strip of gauze saturated with and anesthetic cream is left in the rectal canal at the end of surgery. This gauze will turn black and dissolve. You may notice it in your first bowel movement.
3. Sitz baths should be taken frequently (as often as every few hours) for the first week and daily until healing is complete. A plastic sitz bath basin that fits in the toilet bowl may be purchased, or the bathtub can be used. Alternatively, you may irrigate with a hand held showerhead for 15 minutes at a time.
4. Constipation should be avoided by using stool softeners like Surfak, mineral oil, Metamucil or Colace. These should be used in sufficient amounts to be effective, as they are harmless in excess. For example, two ounces of mineral oil per day is not too much. Pain medicines are very constipating, so use more stool softener than you would in other circumstances. If one day passes without a bowel movement, use a laxative such as Milk of Magnesia. Two ounces of this is safe.
5. Do not attempt to insert anything, such as a suppository, into the rectum for one month after hemorrhoidectomy. You will be told when this is safe and healing is complete.
6. A small amount of bleeding with bowel movements is normal for up to one month after surgery. Pains should be nearly gone by one week post-op except for mild discomfort with bowel movements. The final healing, however, may take one month. Cleansing after bowel movements is best done with a sitz bath, and the plastic stiz bath apparatus allows this to be done without undressing.
7. Please review the general outpatient instruction sheet for other information. The office telephone number is 499-4565. If the office is closed the exchange will answer.
8. Please call the office for a post operative appointment when you get home from the hospital. The office phone number is 499-4565.