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Post-Cholecystectomy (Gallbladder Removal) Instructions

Medications:

1. Take your pain medication as prescribed. Your pain should be controlled enough that you can be up moving around, coughing and deep breathing.
2. Use ibuprofen 400mg orally every 6 hours scheduled for the first 4-5 days. This will help decrease how much pain medication you need. After this, you should continue to use it as needed. The anti-inflammatory property of ibuprofen will help more than you realize. If you have kidney problems, you may not be able to use ibuprofen – please check with me.
3. If you are prone to constipation, surgery and narcotic pain medication make this worse. You should start taking over-the-counter Miralax the day of surgery (you may purchase the generic version) - one capful daily with a large glass of water or other fluid.
4. If your pain medication has acetaminophen in it, be cautious about taking additional acetaminophen. You should not exceed 3000mg daily.

Wound:

1. You may shower the day after surgery. Do not soak your incisions in the tub or a pool until I have seen you in clinic.
2. Mild bruising and swelling is normal. Using an ice pack for 20 minutes 4 times daily will help with this and also with discomfort.
3. Soap may run over your incisions, but do not scrub them or put any ointments or creams on them.
4. If your surgery was done robotic, it is likely your gallbladder was removed from the far left port site – this means it will be sorer and more swollen for longer than the other incisions. If you were sent home with a binder/girdle, wear this when up moving around to help support your abdominal muscles and decrease discomfort. Women, you can also try wearing Spanks (or similar compressive undergarments) or underwear with a front “control” panel.

Diet:

1. It is normal for your appetite to diminish after surgery. This will return as you improve. Eat small, frequent meals to maintain your protein and calorie intake to help improve your body's ability to heal.
2. Drink plenty of non-caffeinated fluids - this will help prevent constipation.
3. Do not drink alcohol with your pain medication or for 48hrs after your surgery.
4. There are no true diet restrictions after having your gallbladder removed, however you may notice loose stool with heavy/greasy food intake. You should start this slowly, and generally it improves with time.

Activity:

1. Do not drive, operate machinery, sign legal documents, or take responsibility for another person for 3-4 days, NOR while taking pain medications.
2. Walk a lot. I would much rather have you up walking around the house every hour during the day, than have you go for one big walk and sit on the couch the rest of the day. The more you do, the easier and less uncomfortable it gets.
3. However, no strenuous exercise or lifting of greater than approximately 20 pounds for 6 weeks.

Call the office (520-638-8311) if you have progressive redness, discharge, or pain at your incisions; persistent nausea or vomiting, or if your temperature is greater than 101°. Also, call with any questions, clarifications, or concerns.

