

Care After Kidney Removal (Nephrectomy)

General Information

This is general information. See your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Surgery

You had surgery to remove all or part of a kidney (nephrectomy). The following information is to help you and your family understand your care at home.

Activity

- Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for 6 weeks.
- Avoid sexual intercourse until after your first visit with your health care provider after your surgery.
- You may feel very tired (fatigue) for about one month after surgery. It takes a while for your body to adjust to the surgery.
- Walk short distances and slowly increase your activity. Only do what your body can tolerate. You should alternate rest and activity.
- You may climb stairs at home.

Food and Beverages

- You may eat your regular foods unless your health care provider gave you other directions.
- Eat more fiber (about 5 servings of fruit and vegetables every day).
- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water every day. This is important.
- Avoid cola drinks, alcohol and coffee. Caffeine and alcohol will dehydrate your body.

Medicine

- You will likely continue to have some discomfort after you leave the hospital. Use pain medicines as prescribed by your health care provider.
- If you were prescribed an antibiotic, take it as directed. If you don't, the medicine will not work well.
- Check with your health care provider before you start taking medicines that you were taking before your surgery.

Incision Site

- It will take about 6 weeks for your incisions to heal.
- Keep your incision sites clean and dry.
- You may take a shower. Do not soak or sit in water (such as a bath, hot tub or swimming pool) until after you see your health care provider at your follow-up appointment.
- If you have Steri-Strips® (thin paper tape) over your incision, they should curl up and fall off within 14 days. Do not pull them off unless your health care provider gives you instructions.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider's office if you have any of the following:

- problems breathing
- chills or fever (more than 100 F)
- upset stomach (nausea), vomiting (throwing up) or both
- blood in your urine
- increased pain not relieved by rest or pain medicine
- sudden decrease in your amount of urine, despite drinking enough fluids
- weight loss or bone pain
- increased redness, swelling or drainage from the incision
- problems urinating.

Follow-up Appointment

Keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.