

General Surgery

After Visit Summary

This is general information. Please 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.

What to Expect After Surgery

- Your complete recovery may take many weeks.
- It is normal to feel “blue” or “down” after you have returned home. If you feel sad or irritable (those feelings don’t go away) for 2 weeks or longer, you need to see your doctor.

Before the Surgery

- Tell your health care provider if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood-thinner medicine.
- Remove any jewelry or piercings.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive after the surgery.

Pain Relief

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.

Activity

- Your health care provider will tell you when it’s OK for you to shower, drive, return to work, exercise and have sex.
- Slowly return to your regular level of activity.
- Follow your health care provider’s directions for how much you can safely lift.
- Rest as needed.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

Incision Care

- Steri-Strips® (paper-like tape) may have been placed on your incision. You may peel them off after 7 days.
- Follow any directions your health care provider gives you.
- If your wound has staples, follow your health care provider’s directions.
- Do not use lotions, creams, ointments, gels or powders on your incision site.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you:

- have a temperature of 101 F or higher
- have new pain or pain you can't control
- have bleeding that gets worse
- have problems having a bowel movement
- have signs of infection at your incision site:
 - pain
 - swelling
 - redness
 - odor
 - warmth
 - green or yellow discharge
- are unable to get out of bed
- have nausea (upset stomach), bloating or vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- have any questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

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