

Colon Surgery

After Visit Summary

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

It takes about 6 weeks for your body to recover from surgery. The type of colon surgery you had may affect how fast you heal.

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.

Your Incision

- Steri-Strips® (paper-like tape) may have been placed on your incision. You may peel them off after 7 days.
- If you have a drain, follow your health care provider's directions.
- Follow any directions your health care provider gives you.

What To Expect After Surgery

- You may be very tired for about 1 month after surgery.
- Once in a while you may see a small amount of drainage at the incision site. This is usually clear or a pink-tinged color. This is normal.
- If you have an incision between your buttocks (in your rectum), you may see a pink watery discharge.
- Wearing sanitary napkins or adult incontinence pads will help protect your clothes and bed linens from drainage.

Pain Relief

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.
- Follow your health care provider's directions for using ice.

Activity

- When you return home from the hospital, take lots of rest periods several times a day.
- Slowly return to your normal activities.
- On days you don't feel well, reduce your activity and increase your rest time. Listen to your body — if an activity hurts, don't do it. But try the activity the next day.

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- Your health care provider will tell you when it's OK for you to shower, drive, return to work and have sex.
- Follow your health care provider's directions for how much you can safely lift.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Follow any instructions your doctor gave you.
- Try to drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water each day to help keep your stools soft.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you:

- have new pain or pain you can't control
- have a temperature higher than 101 F
- increased shortness of breath
- have signs of infection at your incision site:
 - pain
 - swelling
 - redness
 - odor
 - warmth
 - green or yellow discharge

- have rectal bleeding
- have blood in your urine or stool
- have severe constipation (no bowel movement for 3 days) or diarrhea (more than three watery stools within 24 hours)
- have nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- have any questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

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