

POST-OPERATIVE GUIDELINES FOR LAPAROSCOPIC INGUINAL HERNIA SURGERY:

1. You should be able to eat or drink without restrictions, unless you are on a restricted diet for other reasons. In general, avoid food products that may cause bloating or constipation. It is okay to drink alcohol once you are no longer taking prescription pain medicine.
2. It might be difficult to urinate the first few times after surgery, particularly for male patients. This due to the temporary weakness of the urinary bladder following anesthesia. If you develop severe lower abdominal pain and unable to urinate, go to the emergency room where they can provide immediate help.
3. Even the most minor surgical procedure is stressful to the body. You may feel quite tired even for several weeks after the operation. This is NORMAL and not a sign of trouble. If you get tired during the day, try to take a rest or a nap.
4. Take scheduled non-narcotic pain medication for 2-3 days unless you are instructed otherwise. ***If there is no contraindication or documented allergy, the usually recommended schedule is 2 extra strength Tylenol tablets alternating with 3-4 ibuprofen tablets (600-800 MG) every 3 hours, always with a piece of toast or crackers. If you still experience severe pain, take the prescription narcotic pain medication, as needed and directed.*** Remember, narcotic pain medication should only be taken as needed for severe pain and if you already taken the scheduled non-narcotic pain medications. Pressure or discomfort does not warrant the use of narcotics. Narcotics may have serious side effects (constipation, dizziness, urinary retention, nausea, vomiting), may prolong your recovery and you are not allowed to drive if you take them.
5. You may drive again as soon as you feel safe enough to make a short stop with no hesitation and if you are not taking prescription pain medicine. Always wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a car.
6. There are usually 3 small incisions covered by Dermabond (skin glue). It is okay to take a shower 24 hours after the surgery. Do not take a bath or go swimming for 7 days.
7. Occasionally swelling and bruising may occur in the groin and scrotum after the procedure. If this happens, apply ice for the first week. After the first week, heat is usually better. It is also helpful to wear an athletic support (jockstrap) if the swelling is bothersome. Some pain in the testicles is also common for 2 to 3 days after the procedure.
8. Constipation is a frequent problem post-operatively, especially if you are taking any narcotic pain medication. Unless you experience diarrhea, taking a stool softener after leaving the hospital can greatly improve pain control and prevent constipation. Our recommended agent is ***Senokot S*** (over the counter), 2 tablets twice a day starting on the day of the surgery for a week. If you do not have a bowel movement after one or two days at home, you may take a gentle laxative, either Milk of Magnesia or prune juice. If you begin to have severe pain, call us.
9. There are no restrictions on your activity within reason. Walking is good exercise after your operation and will build up your strength. You are the best judge of what you can and cannot do. If something causes severe pain or discomfort, stop immediately. In general, running, jumping or heavy exercise should be avoided for at least 2-3 weeks. Avoid lifting objects over 5-10 lb for 10 days. Otherwise, feel free to do what you wish.
10. If you haven't already been given a follow-up appointment, call my office upon discharge for an appointment in 2 to 3 weeks. Feel free to call us at any time should you have a problem or questions.
11. You may return to work without restrictions as soon as you feel able, usually 3-7 days after the surgery.
12. Avoid direct sunlight to the incisions for about a year if you are concerned about the cosmetic appearance. Sun tanning of the incisions may cause more permanent darkening of your scar.