

## POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ABDOMINAL HERNIA

- **Diet:** start off slow. Drink first. If you have no nausea, you can eat whatever sounds good. Remember that some of the pain medications cause constipation so avoid constipating foods.
- **Activity:** Do not lift > 10 pounds for 6 weeks. Walking around and up stairs and moving around in bed is fine. Being active is good.
  - o Do not drive for the first week unless otherwise specified by your surgeon. Do not drive if you are taking narcotic pain medication.
  - o Wear your abdominal binder tight around your waist when you are upright. This will help with pain and also help reduce the chance of a seroma forming in your old hernia sac.
  - o It is OK to shower. Do not scrub the wounds.
  - o Being active. Walking is a good thing!
- **Pain:** Use ice packs on abdominal wounds during the first 2 days after surgery to reduce pain and bruising.
  - o If you have gas pains, take GasX or liquid simethicone as directed on package. Walk around to help gas pains pass as well.
  - o Narcotics should be used as needed for the first few days after surgery. Ibuprofen or Alieve medications can be used in between doses if you do not have any contraindications for using these anti-inflammatory medications.
- **Constipation:** Pain pills are constipating. Tylenol and ibuprofen are not. Take stool softeners (ie. Senna or colace) while you are taking narcotic pain medicines. If you do not have a bowel movement for 48 hours, try taking milk of magnesia. Call if this is ineffective.
- **Drains:** If you have a drainage tube in place, these usually will be removed in 1-2 weeks after surgery. Call the office when the output is less than 30 ml in 24 hours/daily. You can shower and your drains can get wet (they are plastic)
- **Work:** Returning to your workplace depends on your employment and employer. If you perform heavy lifting, this should be avoided for 6 weeks. If you do not perform heavy activity, you can return to work when you feel able.
- **Follow-up:** If you have a drain in place, you will be seen for removal in the office 1-2 weeks after surgery. If you do not have a drain, you will usually make an appointment to return to the office around 4 weeks after surgery.
- Call the office for fever >101.5° F, increased abdominal pain that does not resolve within 30 minutes or with taking pain medication, or your incisions become red and drain pus.