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Post-Operative Care

1. **It is essential that stools remain soft.** Initially, the stool may be absent, watery, or loose for a short time. Gradually, normal formed stools will return. If you do not have a bowel movement for 48 hours after a procedure – **CALL!** It is important to use some form of fiber supplement, stool softener, and/or laxative following surgery. The medications used – and the dosage – will be determined by the firmness of the stool; i.e., hard stools = more medication; loose stools = less. **NO HARD STOOLS!**

Fiber Supplement:

- Methylcellulose (Citrucel®)
 Other: _____
(use ½ the manufacturer's dose – and drink @ least 16 ounces of water per dose)

Stool Softener:

- docusate (Colace ®) 100 mg twice per day
 Other: _____

Laxative:

- Milk of Magnesia: _____
 Laser Laxative®: _____
 Other: _____

EVEN THOUGH YOU TAKE YOUR STOOL SOFTENING MEDICATIONS DAILY, YOU MAY NOT HAVE A BOWEL MOVEMENT FOR 2-3 DAYS. THIS IS NORMAL.

2. **Do not** push or strain during bowel movements or urination, even though the sensation of incomplete bowel movement passage exists following surgery. This is the result of swelling – which will be minimized by committing to the efforts noted below.
3. **Avoid** heavy lifting, bending, and excessive sitting, standing or walking until your recheck.
4. **Anti-gravity efforts**
- On stomach: with support under your hips with the pelvis elevated.
 - On back: with legs elevated (pillow behind knees, feet and/or legs supported on the wall).
 - On your side: with a pillow between the knees.
 - Support to the anal area is recommended. Firm (but not too hard) pressure to the anus (menstrual/gauze pad, sitting on a piece of thick foam). No “rubber doughnuts”.
 - Regular position changes: try not to stay in one position any longer than 30 minutes.
 - Supporting structures you are using (the bed, a couch or chair, recliner) should be comfortable and firm.
5. **Ice/Heat** applications -- use what works
- 10 to 15 minute applications.
 - Always have something between the ice/heat and your skin.
 - Most effective ice application: crushed-ice pack.
 - Most effective heat application: hot soaks (“sitz” baths) or warm compresses.
 - Consider alternating ice or heat.
6. Bowel movements need special attention: **lubrication** is essential. Apply the recommended salve by finger prior to bowel movements into and around the anal canal. This will help to numb the area. After a bowel movement, a hot tub soak can be comforting. You may clean the area gently with “toilet wipes”; avoid toilet paper and excessive wiping.

Topical medications:

- Laser Cream
- Tetracaine
- Antibiotic Ointment (Bacitracin or Polysporin)
- KY-Jelly, Vaseline, or Aloe Jelly
- Nitroglycerine/Nifedipine

Directions for use: _____

7. **Pain medications**

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) at appropriate doses.
- Anti-inflammatory */** [Ibuprofen (Advil), Naproxen (Aleve) or aspirin] at appropriate doses.
- Narcotic: Lortabs * 2.5 or 5.0/500 (hydrocodone/acetaminophen) as directed
- Other: _____

Start with acetaminophen. For throbbing and aching, the anti-inflammatories work well – and can be added or combined with acetaminophen. However, the Lortabs contain acetaminophen so be careful regarding dosing.

* can cause stomach upset and has the potential for interactions with other medications.

** can cause thinning of the blood and possibly increased bleeding and swelling.

If these efforts do not control your symptoms, contact with the office is indicated.

8. **Other medications:** _____

9. Your **diet** should be moderate in fiber. Green salads, oil and vinegar dressings as well as leafy vegetables, fresh fruits and bran products can be eaten. See the “Toilet Trivia” information regarding fiber and fluids and dietary cautions: chew all foods well; avoid foods that have sharp edges (raw carrots, celery, popcorn, nuts); 2 quarts of water daily (unless fluid restricted); avoid meat and dairy products. Soft foods [i.e., the BRAT diet: Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Tea (dilute); fish, soup, rice, pasta, fruit drinks] are good choices after surgery.
10. You must be **rechecked** in ____ days. Please call the office to schedule an appointment for this recheck if one has not been provided to you.
11. **Blood** with bowel movements or in the underwear is normal for up to 7-10 days. Several small clots may be seen as well. If you feel bleeding is excessive, please CALL. Also, it is common to feel “**bumps**” after surgery. Swelling causes these. If you feel that they are excessive or extremely tender, please CALL.
12. Monitor for **signs of infection** (fever, chills, sweats, nausea or vomiting, increasing or lack of control of pain, an increasingly ill feeling or significant drainage.) and have your necessary **supplies** available.
13. **MOST IMPORTANTLY:** There is no such thing as a foolish question after surgery. If you have any problems or questions, please contact us.

Reasons to call the office

1. Pain – including abdominal
2. Signs of infection -- Prior to contacting the office check your temperature with an accurate oral thermometer.
3. Absence of bowel movements or passage of gas or urine (beyond 48 hours)
4. Any concern or question

14. **Have the following items available:** an accurate thermometer, hydrogen peroxide, toilet wipes, gauze, menstrual pad, piece of foam, any necessary salves, supplements or medications, things to read or listen to or watch to help you to relax.