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YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

After Anal Rectal Surgery

Pain

- Take the pain medicine prescribed for you every four hours as needed.
- Apply LMX 4 or 5 % cream inside and outside your anus every two to four hours as needed. LMX is an over the counter preparation that is not covered by any health insurance. Call around to find a pharmacy that has it in stock. Other preparations include Lidose 5 cream, Lidose 4 cream, 5% Lidocaine ointment (which is less expensive) and Lidocaine Jelly 2% (which is least expensive). These medications require a prescription. The jelly and ointment seems slightly less effective than the creams. You may be able to find these items on the internet for a reduced price.
- Take a hot bath in plain water and soak for at least 20 minutes three times a day. This is a minimum and there is no maximum limit. You can soak as long as you want. Soaking is the most effective method of controlling pain.
- The pain should get better seven to 14 days after surgery.
- Over-the-counter ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) also will help with the pain. If you are not allergic to ibuprofen, you may take 600mg three times each day with food to assist with pain control.

Caring for the Surgery Site

- Take a warm bath the morning after surgery and remove the dressing.
- If you have a bowel movement before morning, remove the dressing and then soak in tub.
- After bathing, pat dry or use a cool hair dryer. Do Not Rub.
- After each bowel movement, gently clean the area with water, or bathe/shower to keep the area clean.
- If you have been told to place a moist gauze pad in the wound, do so several times a day. Tuck the gauze into the wound so that it covers the entire wound surface.

Bowel Movements

- The pain medication may cause constipation and passing a hard stool will add to the pain. Take a fiber supplement, such as Metamucil, Konsyl, Fibercon, Citrucel, Benefiber or any generic brand,

as directed on the package. Be sure to drink six to eight glasses of water or another non-caffeinated beverage a day.

- Take a stool softener while you are taking the pain medicine. Colace (Docusate sodium) 100mg twice a day is the recommended stool softener.
- Do not give yourself an enema unless approved by the surgeon.
- If two days pass without a bowel movement, take two tablespoons of milk of magnesia (30ml) and repeat in eight hours if you have not had a bowel movement. If you still have had no results after three days, take four Dulcolax tablets by mouth at one time. If this does not work within 12 hours, call your surgeon.

Bleeding

- Some bleeding with each bowel movement is expected. If bleeding does not stop within an hour after a bowel movement, if the amount of bleeding increases with time or if you are passing clots of blood, call your surgeon.

Urinating

- It may be difficult to urinate after surgery. Straining to urinate will not harm the area of the surgery. If you can't urinate, try sitting down (men) or urinating in a warm bathtub or shower. If you are still unable to urinate 12 hours after surgery, go to the Emergency Department. It may be necessary to place a catheter into your bladder to empty it. Do not wait longer than 12 to 18 hours.

Activity

- You may do what feels comfortable after surgery. Limit sitting to 10 to 15 minutes at a time. You may sit on a foam pillow but avoid rubber rings or "donuts".
- Avoid driving a car while taking pain medication.
- You may go back to work when you feel ready to do so. This may take several days to several weeks depending upon the procedure. As your doctor for specific limitations.

Follow-Up

- The Colon and Rectal surgical team includes Dr. Bard Cosman, Dr. Sonia Ramamoorthy and Barbara Andrews, Nurse Practitioner.
- Make an appointment with your surgeon for one month after surgery. For appointments with Dr. Bard Cosman call Owen Clinic at 619-543-3995. For appointments with Dr. Ramamoorthy call Perlman Clinic at 858-657-8630.
- For medical questions or concerns please contact Barbara Andrews, NP at 858-822-6517. After hours call 619-543-6737 and ask to speak to the resident on call for your doctor.