

# Discharge Instructions for Colon Surgery

A colectomy is surgery to remove your colon or part of your colon. Your colon, also called the large intestine, is part of your bowel. A colectomy or partial colectomy is performed to remove disease, such as cancer, polyps, diverticulitis, and irritable bowel disease, and to relieve the symptoms you have been having, such as bleeding, blockage, and pain.

## Home Care and Activity

- Walk on a regular basis. Start with short walks each day. Gradually increase the distance you walk and how often you walk. You may walk indoors, outdoors, up and down stairs.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 15 pounds for the first six weeks after your surgery.
- Don't drive for two weeks after surgery. Don't drive while you are taking prescription pain medication.
- Ask your doctor when you can expect to return to work. Most patients are able to return to work within four to six weeks after surgery.
- Diarrhea or loose stools are common for the first week or two after surgery, but if you have watery diarrhea, call your surgeon. This may be a sign of a bowel infection.
- Follow the modified fiber diet prescribed for you in the hospital. Slowly add foods until you get back to your regular diet. If a food gives you stomach or bowel problems, avoid it for a while.
- Drink at least eight glasses of water every day, unless directed otherwise. Remember, if you have an ostomy you need to drink more than what comes out to keep from getting dehydrated.
- Shower as needed. Gently wash your incision with liquid soap and water and pat dry.
- Avoid tub baths until the staples in your incision have been removed.
- You will be sent home on a blood thinner to prevent blood clots post operatively. You will need to inject yourself with this medication daily for 30 days.

## When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor immediately if you have any of the following:

- Fever of 100.5°F or higher
- Diarrhea that lasts more than 3 days
- Nausea and vomiting that won't go away
- Pain in your abdomen that gets worse or is not relieved by pain medication
- Drainage or redness around your incision.

## Follow Up

Make an appointment for follow-up for two weeks after your surgery.