

AFTER CARE Instructions & FAQs Following Anorectal Surgery

Digestive and Liver Center of Florida

Division of Colorectal Surgery

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These instructions apply to patients who have had outpatient operations for **hemorrhoids (including THD surgery), fissures, rectal abscess drainage, anal tag removal, anal lesion removal, or condyloma fulguration, and fistula treatment (all types)**. There may be special or additional instructions for patients who have had pilonidal cyst surgery.

What is the care I should be doing after surgery?

The main care consists of warm SITZ BATHS or BATHTUB SOAKS for 10-15 minutes three times a day. This can be done with TAPWATER ONLY or with EPSOM SALTS added. Do not place any other detergents/soaps on the anal area after surgery.

Do I have a surgical dressing?

In most, but not all cases, you will have a sterile surgical dressing placed in the operating room immediately after your surgery. This can be removed the next morning, and **YOU DO NOT NEED TO PLACE A NEW DRESSING**. Sometimes your doctor will place a specialized "GelFoam" gauze inside the rectum to help stop minor bleeding. Do not be alarmed if you pass a white gauze with your bowel movements as this is normal.

Do I have stitches?

Sometimes your surgeon will place stitches. Most stitches do not need special care. Most stitches are self-absorbing, so they don't need to be removed later. After anorectal surgery, sometimes the wounds that are stitched closed "open up" – **this is normal**. **Do not be alarmed**. There is no special care that needs to be done when the wounds open – keep doing the bath tub soaks and sitz baths. It will heal normally.

Should I apply hemorrhoid or antibiotic creams on the area after my anorectal surgery?

No. You do not need to put antibiotic creams or hemorrhoid creams on the wounds or anal area after surgery. This could hinder the healing process and is not necessary.

Do I have any dietary restrictions after anorectal surgery?

No, but ample water (8-10 glasses, 8 ounces each per day) and ample fiber (25 grams/ day) are recommended. Avoid constipating foods (fatty foods/ greasy foods/ “fast food”) if possible. Sometimes you will be prescribed a “pain killer” after surgery that may have a side-effect of constipation, so it’s important to prevent foods and diets that cause constipation. We recommend plenty of fruits, vegetables, and all bran cereals.

I am constipated after my surgery what can I do?

If after drinking plenty of water and eating high fiber foods you are still constipated, add an over the counter **FIBER SUPPLEMENT** to your diet. Purchase the POWDER FORM of the over the counter supplements – we recommend **BENEFIBER or METAMUCIL**. Mix the powder in a tall glass of water and take it daily.

If you are still constipated, you can take OVER THE COUNTER **MIRALAX**, which is a gentle laxative and is safe to take for a short duration. Take a tablespoon mixed with a tall glass of water daily. **You can take BOTH Miralax and a Fiber Supplement if needed.**

If your stool is ‘hard’ and difficult to pass, try taking an over the counter stool softener – a popular stool softener is **COLACE**. Take it as directed.

Will I be prescribed any medicines after my surgery?

Your doctor may prescribe a medicine to help with post-operative pain. Examples may include Ketorolac (Toradol) and/or a narcotic based medicine (such as Percocet). **Prescriptions are individualized and it’s up to your surgeon when and which medications you will receive after your surgery.** If you receive prescriptions, take them as directed. Due to NEW LAWS IN FLORIDA there are **EXTREMELY STRICT LIMITS ON THE QUANTITY AND DURATION OF NARCOTIC MEDICATIONS PRESCRIBED. REFILLS ARE TYPICALLY NOT ALLOWED.**

What if I’m still in pain after my medication runs out?

Warm bath soaks are very helpful in easing the pain after surgery, so keep doing them. Three times a day is recommended, but if it helps, you can do more. In addition, you can apply OVER THE COUNTER **TOPICAL LIDOCAINE** CREAM/JELLY/OINTMENT. This is available at most major pharmacies and can be applied to the anal area as directed. It will effectively ‘numb’ the region.

Do I need to be on antibiotics?

In most cases, No. Your surgeon may have decided to place you on antibiotics under very specific circumstances, but most “routine” out-patient anorectal operations do not require antibiotics after surgery.

I am not having bowel movements like I normally did before the surgery, is that okay?

Yes. It is VERY COMMON to have a change in your bowel habits immediately after surgery. This can be due to muscle spasm and other factors. It may be 3-5 days before you experience a return of normal bowel habits. Sometimes it can take longer. Be patient, this area take time to heal.

I am not able to urinate is this okay?

No. If you are not able to urinate, try soaking in warm water. Most times after anorectal surgery the urinary sphincter can “clamp down” and not want to relax, so it may be hard for you to urinate. **If you try soaking in warm water and are still not able to urinate, you will need to seek medical attention.** Notify the colorectal surgery office or doctor on call. You will need to go to nearest emergency room to have a temporary catheter (Foley Catheter) placed to drain your bladder, to prevent too much urine from building up.

What if I see blood after surgery?

Some blood and blood stained bandages are normal after surgery. Expect to see some small amount of blood with bowel movements and with wiping after anorectal surgery for 14 days. Large amounts of blood and clots of blood are not normal and if you experience this, notify your doctor immediately.

I just had anorectal surgery and I have a fever, what should I do?

Low grade fevers (99°F) the day after the operation are not uncommon. It's okay to take Tylenol (acetaminophen) for a low grade fever, but notify your doctor if the fever persists. High fevers 101 or greater) may need to be evaluated and you should notify your doctor. Although infection after anorectal operations are not common, signs including fever/nausea/vomiting should be addressed – call your doctor if you experience these or other unusual symptoms after surgery.

Do I need to have a follow up appointment?

All operations require follow up. If you do not already, schedule an office appointment with the doctor who performed your surgery. Typically, this follow up appointment will be 10-14 days after the date you had your surgery.

I still have questions, who can I call?

We are available 24/7 by phone **(407) 384-7388 – Ext. 601** (Division of Colorectal Surgery)