

Outpatient Surgery, Adult, Care After

The following information offers guidance on how to care for yourself after your procedure. Your health care provider may also give you more specific instructions. If you have problems or questions, contact your health care provider.

What can I expect after the procedure?

After the procedure, it is common to have:

- Tenderness at the surgical site.
- Swelling, bruising, and numbness around the surgical site.
- Nausea.

Follow these instructions at home:

For the time period you were told by your health care provider:

- Rest.
- **Do not** participate in activities where you could fall or become injured.
- **Do not** drive or use machinery.
- **Do not** drink alcohol.
- **Do not** take sleeping pills or medicines that cause drowsiness.
- **Do not** make important decisions or sign legal documents.
- **Do not** take care of children on your own.

Medicines

- If you were prescribed antibiotics, take them as told by your health care provider. **Do not** stop using the antibiotic even if you start to feel better.
- Ask your health care provider if the medicine prescribed to you:
 - Requires you to avoid driving or using machinery.
 - Can cause constipation. You may need to take these actions to prevent or treat constipation:
 - Drink enough fluid to keep your urine pale yellow.
 - Take over-the-counter or prescription medicines.
 - Eat foods that are high in fiber, such as beans, whole grains, and fresh fruits and vegetables.
 - Limit foods that are high in fat and processed sugars, such as fried or sweet foods.
- Take over-the-counter and prescription medicines only as told by your health care provider.

Eating and drinking

- Follow instructions from your health care provider about what you may eat and drink.
- When you are hungry, start by eating light and bland foods. Slowly return to your regular diet.
- If you vomit:
 - Drink clear fluids slowly and in small amounts as you are able. Clear fluids include water, ice chips, low-calorie sports drinks, and fruit juice that has water added to it (diluted fruit juice).
 - Eat light and bland foods in small amounts as you are able. These foods include bananas, applesauce, rice, lean meats, toast, and crackers.

Incision care



- If you have an incision, follow instructions from your health care provider about how to take care of it. Make sure you:
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after you change your bandage (dressing). If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
 - Change your dressing as told by your health care provider.
 - Leave stitches (sutures), staples, skin glue, or adhesive strips in place. These skin closures may need to stay in place for 2 weeks or longer. If adhesive strip edges start to loosen and curl up, you may trim the loose edges. **Do not** remove adhesive strips completely unless your health care provider tells you to do that.
- Check your incision area every day for signs of infection. Check for:
 - Redness, swelling, or pain.
 - Fluid or blood.
 - Warmth.
 - Pus or a bad smell.

Activity



- **Do not** play contact sports until your health care provider says it is okay.
- You may have to avoid lifting. Ask your health care provider how much you can safely lift.
- Return to your normal activities as told by your health care provider. Ask your health care provider what activities are safe for you.

General instructions

- If you have sleep apnea, surgery and certain medicines can increase your risk for breathing problems. Follow instructions from your health care provider about wearing your sleep device:
 - Anytime you are sleeping, including during daytime naps.
 - While taking prescription pain medicines, sleeping medicines, or medicines that make you drowsy.
- Have a responsible adult care for you for the time you are told. It is important to have someone help you until you are awake and alert.
- **Do not** use any products that contain nicotine or tobacco. These products include cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and vaping devices, such as e-cigarettes. These can delay healing after surgery. If you need help quitting, ask your health care provider.

- **Do not** take baths, swim, or use a hot tub until your health care provider approves. Ask your health care provider if you may take showers. You may only be allowed to take sponge baths.

Contact a health care provider if:

- You have any signs of infection.
- You have a fever or chills.
- You develop a cough.
- You feel light-headed, or you faint.
- You develop a rash.
- You keep feeling nauseous or keep vomiting.
- You have severe pain, even after taking the medicines your health care provider has prescribed or recommended.
- You have constipation.

Get help right away if:

- You cannot urinate.
- You have trouble staying awake.
- You have trouble breathing.
- You have chest pain.
- Your legs become painful or swollen.

These symptoms may be an emergency. Get help right away. Call 911.

- **Do not wait to see if the symptoms will go away.**
- **Do not drive yourself to the hospital.**

Summary

- Nausea is common after a procedure.
- Have a responsible adult care for you for the time you are told.
- Follow instructions from your health care provider about what you may eat and drink. If you vomit, drink clear fluids slowly and eat light and bland foods in small amounts.
- Ask your health care provider what activities are safe for you.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.