

# Discharge Instructions for Ventral/Incisional Hernia Repair

A hernia is a tear or weakness in the wall of the abdomen. This weakness may be present at birth. Or it can be caused by the wear and tear of daily living. Hernias may get worse with time, with weight gain or with physical stress. It is very important to maintain a steady weight or to decrease your weight after surgery. If you gain weight the hernia will reoccur.

## Activity After Surgery

- After surgery, take it easy for the rest of the day.
- Don't drive while you are still taking narcotic pain medication and don't drive for at least two weeks after the operation.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 15 pounds until your doctor says it's okay.
- Don't mow the lawn, use a vacuum cleaner, or do other strenuous activities until your doctor says it's okay.
- You may walk indoors, outdoors, up and down stairs.
- Avoid constipation:
  - Eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
  - Drink six to eight glasses of water a day, unless otherwise instructed.
  - Use a laxative or a mild stool softener if your doctor says it's okay.
- Sexual activity as tolerated. If it starts to hurt, please stop.
- Bandage and Incision Care - Remove any gauze bandage in 48 hours
- We may ask you to use an abdominal binder for the first 6 weeks after surgery. You need to wear this as much as possible, including while sleeping. Most patients find this provides added comfort and reduces pain. At times back pain can develop from overuse due to painful abdomen muscles. This binder will help support your abdomen and relieve pressure on your back. It is also important to reduce the fluid that accumulates above the mesh after the repair.
- If strips of tape were used to close your incision called steri strips, don't pull them off. Let them fall off on their own.
- You may shower in 48 hours.
- Wash your incision with liquid soap and water. Pat it dry. Don't use oils, powders, or lotions on your incision.

## When to Call Your Doctor

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

- Bleeding
- Increasing pain
- Increased redness or drainage of the incision
- Fever 100.5°F, or higher
- Nausea or vomiting

## Follow Up

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