



Discharge Instructions for Open Hernia Repair

You had a procedure called open hernia repair. Also called a rupture, a hernia is a tear or weakness in the wall of the belly. 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 or with physical stress. Surgery can help repair the weakness and eliminate symptoms.

Activity after surgery

- After surgery, take it easy for the rest of the day. If you had general anesthesia, don't use machinery or power tools, drink alcohol or make any major decisions for at least the first 24 hours.
- Don't drive while you are still taking opioid pain medicine, and don't drive until you are able to step firmly on the brake pedal without hesitation.
- Ask others to help with chores and errands while you recover.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 10 pounds until your health care provider says it's OK.
- Don't mow the lawn, use a vacuum cleaner or do other strenuous activities until your health care provider says it's OK.
- Walk as often as you feel able.
- Continue the coughing and deep breathing exercises that you learned in the hospital.
- Ask your health care provider when you can expect to return to work.
- 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 as instructed by your health care provider.

Bandage and incision care

- Do not get the bandage or wound wet for 48 hours.
- If strips of tape were used to close your incision, don't pull them off. Let them fall off on their own.
- Remove any gauze bandage in 48 hours.
- Wash your incision with mild soap and water. Pat it dry. Don't use oils, powders or lotions on your incision. Do not soak your incision or take tub baths until cleared by your health care provider.

Follow-up care

Keep follow-up appointments during your recovery. These allow your health care provider to check your progress and make sure you're healing well. You may also need to have your stitches, staples or bandage removed. During office visits, tell your health care provider if you have any new symptoms. And be sure to ask any questions you have.

When to call your health care provider

Call your health care provider right away if you have any of the following:

- A large amount of swelling or bruising (some testicular swelling and bruising is common)
- Bleeding
- Increasing pain
- Increased redness or drainage of the incision
- Fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher, or as directed by your health care provider
- Trouble urinating
- Nausea or vomiting

