

POST-OPERATIVE GUIDELINES FOR LAPAROSCOPIC INCISIONAL / VENTRAL / UMBILICAL HERNIA SURGERY:

1. You should be able to eat or drink without restrictions, unless you are on a restricted diet for other reasons. It is okay to drink alcohol once you are no longer taking prescription pain medicine.
2. Even the most minor surgical procedure is stressful to the body. You may feel quite tired even for several weeks after the operation. This is NORMAL and not a sign of trouble. If you get tired during the day, try to take a rest or a nap.
3. You may drive again as soon as you feel safe enough to make a short stop with no hesitation and if you are not taking prescription pain medicine. Always wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a car.
4. There are usually 3-4 small incisions covered by paper strips (Steri-Strips) and gauze or Dermabond (skin glue) on one side of the abdomen and a few very small incisions around the area of the hernia. There might be a bulky compression dressing with a clear plastic covering right over the previous hernia – leave this on for at least a week. You may remove the gauze in 48 hours; leave the Steri-Strips on until they fall off. Do not try to remove the Dermabond – it will come off over weeks. It is okay to take a shower 48 hours after the surgery. Do not take a bath or go swimming for 7 days.
5. Constipation is a frequent problem post-operatively, especially if you are taking any narcotic pain medication. Unless you experience diarrhea, taking a stool softener after leaving the hospital can greatly improve pain control and prevent constipation. Our recommended agent is Senokot S (over the counter), 2 tablets twice a day for a week. If you do not have a bowel movement after one or two days at home, you may take a gentle laxative, either Milk of Magnesia or prune juice. If you begin to have severe pain, call us.
6. There are no restrictions on your activity within reason. Walking is good exercise after your operation and will build up your strength. You are the best judge of what you can and cannot do. If something causes severe pain or discomfort, stop immediately. In general, running, jumping or heavy exercise should be avoided for at least 2-3 weeks. Otherwise, feel free to do what you wish.
7. If you haven't already been given a follow-up appointment, call my office upon discharge for an appointment in 2 to 3 weeks. Feel free to call us at any time should you have a problem or questions.
8. You may return to work without restrictions as soon as you feel able, usually 7 to 10 days after the surgery.
9. Avoid direct sunlight to the incisions for about a year if you are concerned about the cosmetic appearance. Sun tanning of the incisions may cause more permanent darkening of your scar.
10. If you believe that you run out of pain medication within 12 hours, please call in normal work hours (9 am to 4 pm) for a refill. This way we can guarantee timely refill of your prescription.