

Radical Cystectomy Postoperative Instructions

This is a major surgery consisting of the removal of the bladder and pelvic lymph nodes. A conduit has been made from a small piece of intestine to transfer urine from the ureters to the skin. The surgically created opening in the abdomen is called a “stoma” from which the urine drains. An external collecting device (ostomy bag) is worn to collect the urine. You will be taught how to care for your urostomy before leaving the hospital.

Activities at Home

- You may shower the day after you go home, but do not take tub baths. The main incision and the places where the drains were removed usually require no bandage.
- Avoid lifting anything that weighs over 5 - 10 pounds for six weeks, to allow your main incision to heal completely, and do not strain for six weeks. Sexual activity may be resumed after 6 weeks. Daily exercises such as walking or climbing stairs will help you recover more quickly, but do not do any heavy exercise such as jogging, swimming, weight lifting or golf. Do not drive for 2 weeks and limit long car rides.
- Avoid sitting for long periods of time with your feet on the floor. Keep your feet propped up on a stool. Get up often to walk. Gradually increase pace and distance as tolerated. This is important to help you blood circulate and help prevent blood clots.

Your Diet and Your Bowels

- When you go home, eat the foods you normally eat. Because most people are a bit anemic after the operation, it is a good idea to eat iron-rich foods such as red meats, spinach, and other green leafy vegetable for the first month or two.
- It is common to have diarrhea. You can help control the diarrhea by eating high-fiber foods like vegetables, fruits and whole grains and also by eating yogurt and drinking buttermilk.
- You can expect to lose 20-25 pounds after surgery. If you are concerned about weight loss, drink products like Ensure® or Carnation Instant Breakfast®. It is common to have a light appetite and feel full quickly. Eating 6 smaller, nutritious meals instead of 3 larger ones can also be helpful.
- A stool softener such as Colace once or twice a day, occasionally may be needed.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water or other fluids each day
- Do not drink alcohol if you are taking medication.
- If necessary, use 1-2 tablespoons of a mild laxative such as Milk of Magnesia at bedtime.

Returning to Work

Generally you should not plan to return to work for at least 6 weeks after surgery.

Call our office if:

- Fever of more than 102 F
- Your feet or ankles are swollen, calves are tender, with or without shortness of breath
- Abdominal distention or pain
- No drainage from catheter or in pouch, or marked decrease of urinary output
- Inability to urinate after catheter is removed
- Redness, inflammations, or a foul smell around your wound
- Nausea, vomiting, Persistent or severe diarrhea