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Post-operative Radical Prostatectomy Instructions

Post-operative care in the hospital:

After completion of your surgery you will be admitted to the hospital anywhere between 2-5 days. The healing process takes time and depending on how you are recovering will determine your length of hospital stay.

What will be happening during your hospital stay?

1. **Eating.** Initially after the surgery you will not be able to eat until your bowel functions returns. You will remain on intra-venous fluids. Once your bowel function returns you will be started on clear liquids and slowly advanced to a regular diet.
2. **Urethral catheter.** A foley catheter will be in place after your surgery to allow your bladder to heal to your urethra. This will stay in place for 7-14 days but can stay in longer if added healing time is needed. Your doctor will let you know when your catheter can be removed.
3. **Pelvic Drains.** After the surgery you will have a drain in your abdomen. It will be emptied periodically by the nurse. Once the drainage is minimal your doctor will remove the drain while you are in the hospital.
4. **Pain Management.** After the surgery you will have a PCA pump. This pump allows you to press a button each time you require pain medicine. The medicine is immediately delivered from the pump to you intravenously. Your nurse will explain how to use the pump. The day after your surgery the pump is discontinued and you will be started on oral pain medication
5. **Preventing Blood clots.** During the operations and through the night after the surgery you will wear self-inflating stockings. These stockings promote blood circulation in the legs. Once you get out of bed they will be removed
6. **Antibiotics.** You will remain on intravenous antibiotics after the surgery. These will change to oral antibiotics upon discharge.
7. **Rounds.** A physician from our office will see you daily until you are discharged. Timing of rounds are generally early in the morning but can vary due to the unexpected changes in the doctor's schedule.

Your Recovery at Home

Activity Restrictions:

1. **Sitting.** During the first 4 weeks that you are home do not sit upright in a firm chair for more than one hour. You may sit in a reclining chair, on a sofa, or in a comfortable chair with a footstool.
2. **No heavy lifting.** For 4-6 weeks you will not be allowed to do any heavy exertion or lifting greater than 10 lbs.
3. **No Driving.** You will not be able to drive for several weeks. You can be a passenger in the car for short distances. During your follow-up visit ask the doctor when you can drive again.
4. **Walking.** Gradually increase the amount of walking you do each day as tolerated. Do not walk to the point of exhaustion. You should walk a minimum of 6 times a day. You may walk up and down stairs.



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5. **Showering / Bathing.** You may begin showering after surgery. You may NOT take a bath until your incision is fully healed. If you have surgical staples they will be removed during your first post-operative visit. You may have white tapes on your incision called “steri-strips”. Do NOT pull them off.
6. **Pain.** Any pain experienced post-op should be relieved with your discharge pain medications. Do NOT take Aspirin or aspirin containing medications without asking your doctor.
7. **Diet.** Return to your normal eating habits. Avoid spicy or fatty foods for the first week.
 - a. **IMPORTANT**
 - i. Drink lots of fluids, avoid caffeine and alcohol
 - ii. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables and fiber rich foods. These help decrease the risk of constipation
 - iii. While on pain medications take 2-3 colace tablets daily. If constipation occurs, take Milk of Magnesia 1 tablespoon 2 times daily until a bowel movement occurs. DO NOT USE SUPPOSITORIES OR ENEMAS.
8. **No Sexual Activity.** This will be discussed by your doctor after your catheter is removed.

Care of your foley catheter:

While you are at home have your foley catheter connected to the large bedtime drainage bag most of the time. The leg bag should only be used when you go out.

What can happen after your procedure:

1. **Bladder Spasms.** These present with cramping in the lower abdomen, urgency to urinate or brief pelvic or rectal pressure for several days or until your catheter is removed. You may also have urine leaking around the tip of the catheter. This can be relieved by rest. If severe, contact your physician and he or she may be able to start an anti-spasmodic medication.
2. **Blood.** It is normal to have a small amount of blood in your urine while the catheter is in. This should be relieved by rest. Once the catheter is removed it is not unusual to have a small amount of blood or blood clots at the beginning or end of your urinary stream. This may occur in the first few weeks after the surgery.
3. **Scrotal Swelling.** If the scrotum is swollen wear supportive briefs or an athletic support. When resting, elevate your scrotum on a rolled towel. Scrotal swelling is common for up to a week but it is harmless and painless.
4. **Incontinence.** Once your catheter is removed problems with urinary control are normal. Urinary control returns in 3 phases
 - a. You are dry when lying down
 - b. You are dry when walking around
 - c. You are dry when you rise from a seated position or with activity



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It is important for you to perform your kegel exercises, kegels, 20 times in the morning and 20 times in the evening.

Your post-operative Visit: (7-14 days after surgery)

1. Please wear dark colored, loose fitting clothing. Wear jockey-style briefs.
2. Bring an incontinence pad "Depends" this can be purchased at any pharmacy.
3. Your catheter will be removed if your doctor believes there has been adequate healing time
4. If you have surgical staples, they will be removed, incision cleaned and steri-strips placed.
5. Your doctor will discuss your plan of care, future follow-up visits, final surgical pathology results, sexual activity and incontinence.

Call your physician for the following:

1. **Fever** – temperature greater than 101 F
2. **Catheter Problems**
 - a. Urine not draining
 - b. Red blood not relieved with rest or increased fluid intake
 - c. Catheter inadvertently pulled out
3. **Nausea, Vomiting or Severe abdominal pain / bloating**
4. **Inability to urinate** after catheter is removed or decreased force of stream and sensation of incomplete emptying of your bladder
5. Problems at the **incision site**
 - a. Redness or warmth around the incision
 - b. Pus draining from the incision
 - c. Separation of the skin at the incision line

The following require **immediate attention!!** If you are unable to contact your urologist, you should go to the closest emergency room.

1. Chest pain
2. Difficulty breathing
3. Sensation of heart racing
4. Pain in the thigh, calf or groin
5. Swelling of the leg
6. Red streaking color on the leg