

ROCKFORD UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATES, LTD.
351 EXECUTIVE PARKWAY
ROCKFORD, IL 61107
(815) 398-4057

ROBOTIC PROSTATECTOMY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS
(AFTER YOUR SURGERY)

DIET:

- Eat clear liquids such as Jell-O, broth, or juices (no pop or carbonated beverages) until you are passing gas and/or feel less bloated. You may then resume a soft regular diet such as oatmeal, toast, scrambled eggs, etc. Eating smaller meals rather than 3 large meals per day is helpful. Avoiding gas-producing foods such as beans and broccoli.

(Please see the enclosed sheet for a list of clear liquids and also some soft diet suggestions)

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

- It is good for you to walk around, but please do not "over do" it.
- Do not sit in one place for longer than 45 minutes at a time.
- **Absolutely no biking, motorcycling, or horseback riding for 6 weeks.**
- You can do as much walking and stair climbing as you can tolerate. Go slow and work your way back to your pre-surgery activity level.
- You may take a shower 48 hours after surgery. Once the catheter is removed, you may take a bath; however, **no hot tubs for 4 weeks after surgery.**
- Do not drive while taking pain medications.

SKIN INTEGRITY:

- You will have 6 port sites (small incisions that we perform surgery through) that will have Steri-Strips (small pieces of tape) and Band-Aids over them.
- Band-Aids may come off in 48 hours. Steri-Strips may also come off as early as 48 hours post-surgery or they may stay in place until you are seen in clinic.
- Once your dressings are off, it is not uncommon to have some drainage from where your dressings were. There are no staples or stitches to be taken out. You may use Polysporin ointment on the small incisions once your dressings/Band-Aids are off.

URINARY CATHETER: (also called a Foley catheter):

- During your surgery you will have a urinary catheter placed in your bladder. A urinary catheter is a tube carrying urine from your bladder to the outside of your body into a bag. This urinary catheter will stay in place until your anastomosis heals, which usually takes about 6-14 days. At home, the catheter should drain into a large bag. When you want to go out, you can wear a smaller bag under your pant leg. You and your family will also receive instructions regarding the care of your urinary catheter before discharge from the hospital.

DRAIN:

- There is a chance you may go home with a drainage tube that comes out of one of the port sites on your abdomen. You will be instructed on how to care for it and when it will come out.

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MEDICATIONS:

- You may resume your daily medications as soon as you are discharged from the hospital. The only exceptions to this are all blood thinners such as Coumadin and Plavix.
- A pain medication will be prescribed for you, to be taken by mouth as directed for pain. You will receive a prescription the day of your discharge.
- An anti-inflammatory helps reduce perineal discomfort which may be present after surgery. Ibuprofen 600 mg twice a day is recommended.
- A stool softener should be taken by mouth two times daily. This should be started once you are eating regular food, which may take one to four days after surgery. Colace is a good choice. You can buy this medication over the counter and do not need a prescription. All narcotic pain medications are constipating and a stool softener will help prevent this.
- **An antibiotic will be prescribed to you, to be taken by mouth. Start this the day before you come in to have your catheter out and continue taking this medication for 5 full days. You will receive a prescription the day of your discharge.**

CLOTHING:

- After surgery, your abdomen will be bloated and it will be difficult to fit into your regular button pants. It is recommended that you wear elastic or draw-string waist pants for comfort.

RECOVERY TIME:

- The operation lasts two to four hours and the hospitalization usually lasts 24 hours. All patients go home with a catheter in place continually draining the urine into a drainage bag. Some patients also go home with a drainage tube as noted above.
- You will be seen about 6-14 days after surgery in the clinic.
- You will be cleared to return to work generally 2 weeks after the catheter is removed.
- Most men have difficulty with urinary control at the beginning and will require some form of protection, such as a pad that fits inside your underwear. That is why it is important at the first visit to bring a few pads and a couple of pairs of brief-style underwear.
- Within one to three months, most men have achieved reasonably good control and require minimum protection, if any. Sometimes, the recovery
- of continence is slower, but rarely more than six months.
- Kegel exercises should be started/resumed after the Foley catheter is removed, and if you have *no perineal pain/discomfort*. These exercises help to regain your continence. At first, it may be hard to find these muscles, but can be done by starting and stopping your urine stream. Once you find the correct muscles, repeat the flexing and relaxing of these muscles without urinating. Begin by squeezing the muscles for a count of 3, and then relax for a count of 3.

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- Work up to repeating these exercises for two to three times a day. These will help to strengthen your muscles around the bladder that help hold the urine. For more detailed information on how to perform Kegel's, please see instruction sheet enclosed in this packet.
- As noted above, if you are experiencing perineal pain after surgery, wait until this has subsided (sometimes 2-6 weeks) before beginning Kegel exercises. These exercises may aggravate the discomfort.
- The recovery or potency after a prostatectomy can be slow and time-dependent. Even though the nerves to the penis can be spared, there is still some injury from trauma or stretching from the operation. These damaged nerves need time to heal. At each follow-up visit, we will discuss issues regarding sexual function with you.

THINGS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER AFTER SURGERY:

- **Bruising around the incision sites:** Not uncommon and should not alarm you. This will resolve over time.
- **Abdominal distention, Constipation, or Bloating:** Make sure you are taking your stool softener as directed. If you don't have a bowel movement or pass gas or are feeling uncomfortable 48 hours after surgery, it is safe to use a Dulcolax suppository. Once you are passing gas regularly you may also want to try taking Milk of Magnesia as directed on the bottle, but use no more than two doses.
- **Weight Gain:** Do not be alarmed. This is temporary due to the gas and fluid shifts. Your weight will be back to your pre-operative weight in generally 2-3 weeks.
- **Scrotal/Penile Swelling and Bruising:** This is not abnormal and should not alarm you. It may appear immediately after surgery or may start 4-5 days after surgery. Your scrotum swelling may become as big as an orange or grapefruit – again, **DO NOT BE ALARMED**. This should resolve in about 7-14 days. You may also try elevating your scrotum on a small towel or washcloth that you have rolled up when you are sitting or lying down to decrease the swelling. It is also recommended to wear Jockey or snug-fitting underwear for support, even with the catheter in place.
- **Bloody drainage around the Foley catheter or in the urine:** Especially after increasing activity or following a bowel movement, this is not uncommon. While this is often alarming, it is not uncommon and usually resting for a short period of time improves the situation.
- **Leaking urine around the catheter:** You may have some urine that leaks around the tube - **THIS IS OK**. Also, you may have a little bloody drainage around the catheter as well. If this happens you may need to wear your underwear with a pad inside for protection/absorption. However, most of the urine should drain into the collection bag.

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- **Bladder Spasms:** It is not uncommon with the catheter in and even after the catheter comes out to have bladder spasms. You may feel mild to severe bladder pain or cramping, the sudden, urgent need to urinate, or a burning sensation when you urinate. Call us if this persists without relief.
- **Perineal Pain:** (pain between your rectum and scrotum)**Testicular Discomfort:** Perineal/testicular discomfort may last for several weeks after surgery, but it will resolve. Call us if the pain medication does not alleviate this. You can also try elevating your feet on a small stool when you have a bowel movement, using Anusol ointment, and increasing the fiber and water intake in your diet.
- **Lower leg/ankle swelling:** This is not abnormal when it occurs in both legs and should not alarm you. It should resolve in about 7-14 days. Elevating your legs while sitting will help.

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:

- You will be scheduled for a cystogram (an x-ray of your bladder) to see if enough healing has occurred in order to remove the Foley catheter. At the next appointment, you will need to bring a pair or two of brief-style underwear and several Depend guards for Men pads. *Remember to **start** your antibiotics 24 hours prior to coming to this appointment and continue the antibiotics for 5 full days when the catheter is removed.
- **Four to six weeks after surgery and every three months after that:** You will continue to follow up with a PSA drawn prior to each appointment.
- **At each visit you will receive education on how to maintain urinary continence and on therapies to assist with erectile function such as: oral medications, vacuum erectile devices and intracorporeal injections or a combination of the above.**
- We will also be looking for evidence of recurrence or re-growth of the tumor. That is done by drawing blood for the Prostate Specific Antigen or the PSA blood test.