

Colon Surgery Discharge Advice

Overview

Recovering from colon surgery is an important part of your health journey. This guide provides useful tips to support your recovery journey, from managing post-operative care to making gradual adjustments in diet and activity. By following these steps, you can optimize your healing process and resume your regular daily living.

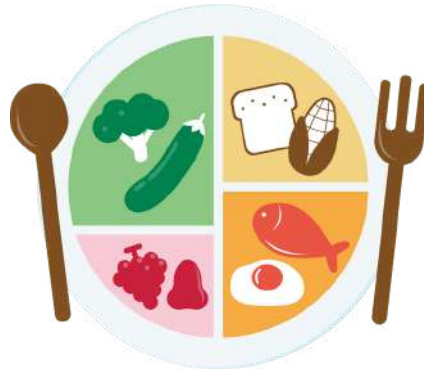


Dietary Modifications

Maintain a healthy and balanced diet. Eat slowly and chew your food thoroughly to aid your digestion.

During the initial weeks after surgery, your bowel may swell, and it is highly recommended to have a low-fiber diet to support your recovery. Once the swelling subsides, typically 6 to 8 weeks later, you can gradually return to a normal diet to help your intestinal system resume its function smoothly.

Your doctor may refer you to a registered dietitian to help you create a healthy eating plan.



Adequate Rest

Getting adequate and good quality of rest or sleep will help your body relax and recover. It is strongly recommended to have a regular 7 to 9 hours of sleep each day.



Active Lifestyle

Maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle is crucial for your recovery. Regular exercise helps you get back to your daily activities sooner. Having a stoma does not typically restrict your activities significantly, so you can resume all your usual activities, including active sports, once you have fully healed from the surgery.

Avoid strenuous activity that may cause injury or pain. This will allow your wound to heal promptly. Do not lift heavy objects for at least 2 months.

Follow your doctor's instructions regarding when you can go back to your usual work and leisure activities.

Hydration

It is essential to stay fully hydrated after surgery by drinking at least 6 to 8 glasses of water daily, unless advised otherwise. For individuals with an ileostomy, it is especially important to maintain adequate fluid intake to prevent dehydration.

Follow the guidance of your ostomy nurse specialist to monitor your daily oral intake and stoma output, keeping a record as recommended.



Bowel Habits

The frequency of your bowel movements will vary, depending on the type of ostomy you have, your diet, and your bowel habits before surgery. Your dietary intake will influence the amount, frequency, and consistency of your stools.

Certain foods are more likely to cause digestive symptoms, such as constipation, diarrhoea, gas, or odorous stools.

Consult your doctor if no bowel movements for 3 days or more, and he may introduce laxatives if required.

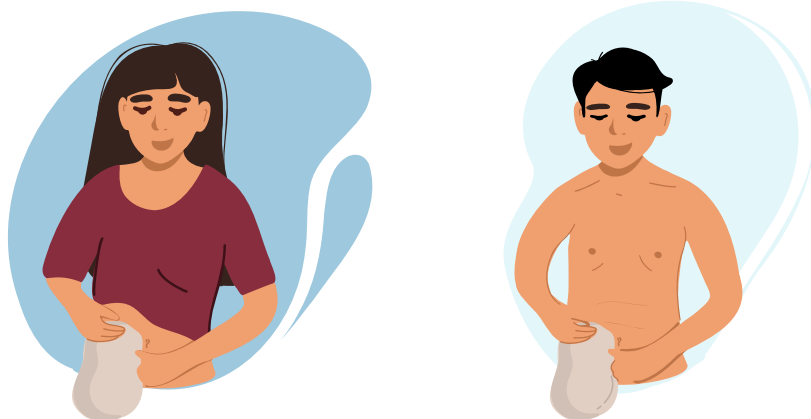
Pain Medications

Pain is expected following the surgery. You may be given pain relief medications upon discharge.

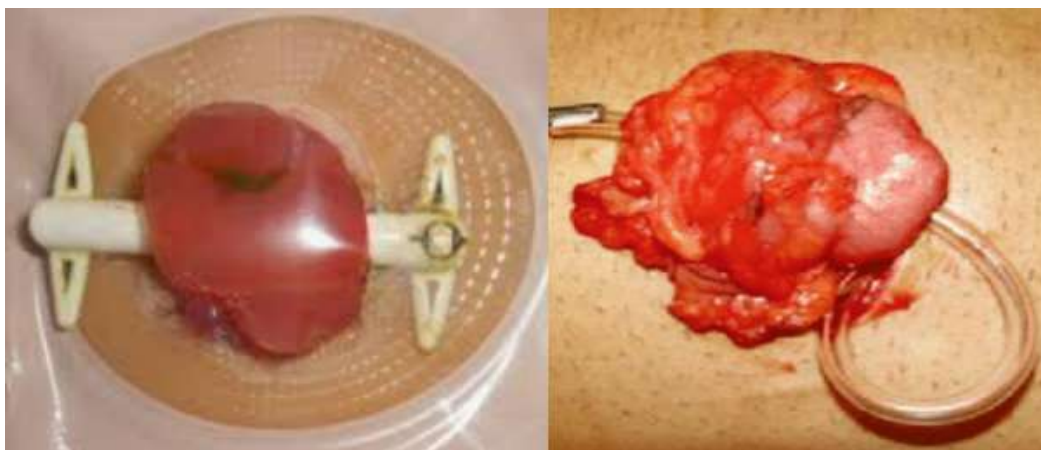
You are advised to take pain medications regularly. Effective pain relief reduces suffering and supports a quicker recovery. If pain persists or worsens, consult your doctor promptly for further guidance.

Stoma Care and Wound Care

During the first 6 to 8 weeks after surgery, your stoma size may change as swelling gradually subsides. Your ostomy nurse specialist will recommend a new pouching system to accommodate these changes. The pouches are waterproof, odor-free, and prevent gas or stool leakage when worn correctly. Typically, a stoma bag can last 5 to 7 days, but if there is any leaking, it's important to change the pouch immediately.

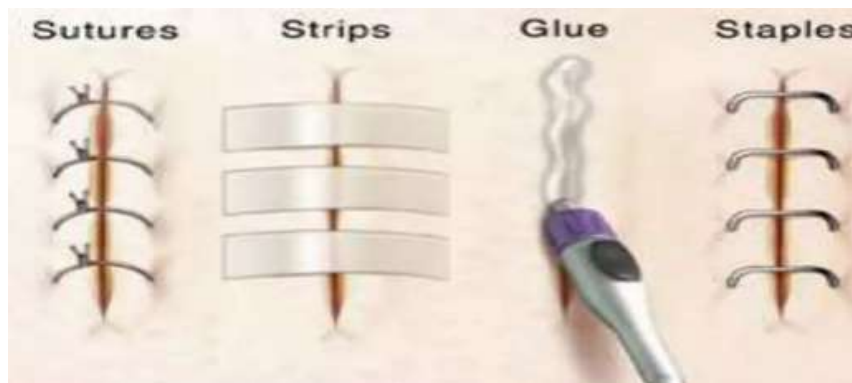


If you have a stoma rod in place, you will be scheduled for an appointment with your ostomy nurse specialist to have it removed.



Your surgical incision can be small keyholes or midline incision over the abdomen. The wound is closed by adhesive tapes, stitches, staples, or topical skin adhesive. You will be given an advice when to remove your stitches or staples. Some wound stitches will dissolve with time and do not need to remove.

Always maintain the dressing clean and dry. Avoid rubbing, scratching, or putting pressure to the wound site to prevent wound infection.



You will be given follow-up appointment upon discharge to monitor the progress of your wound and ensure that it heals well.

When to seek medical advice

Please seek medical advice immediately if you have any of the following symptoms, as it may be related to a serious complication.

- problems with your stoma, such as changes in a stoma's size, shape, colour, or odour.
- bleeding from inside or around the stoma that is heavy or doesn't stop, or an injury or deep cut to the stoma.
- cramping in the abdomen that lasts for more than 2 or 3 hours.
- nausea and vomiting that is severe or does not stop.
- passing no gas or stool from a stoma for more than 4 to 6 hours, along with cramping and nausea
- severe diarrhoea or watery output from a stoma, which could lead to dehydration.

Additional warning signs that your wound may be infected:

- Warm, red skin surrounding the wound.
- Yellowish-green discharge/pus leaking from the wound.
- Odorous smell coming from the wound.
- Aches and pains accompanied with fever and chills.



For any medical assistance:

Please call 6363 3000 during office hours from Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm.

You can also visit WH Emergency Department after office hours, including weekends and public holidays.

Location: Tower B, Level B1

Address: 17 Woodlands Dr 17, Singapore 737628

Contributed by Nursing

This brochure is produced for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health or medical condition.

Information shared is accurate as of June 2024 and subject to revision without prior notice.



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