



Patient & Family Guide
2016

After Rectal Surgery



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After Rectal Surgery

Managing discomfort and caring for your incision (cut)

- Your doctor may suggest that one of the most important things you can do is to sit in a tub of warm salted water (a sitz bath) 3-4 times a day. This is also important to do before **and** after each bowel movement. It is recommended you sit for 15-20 minutes. Add a handful of Epsom salts or table salt to the bath.
- You may have a gauze packing in place which will fall out or it may be removed by staff before you go home. Your stitches will dissolve (go away) on their own.
- You may have some discomfort. Take the pain pills your doctor suggests as needed.
- It is important to check with your doctor before using a cushion to sit on for comfort and to lessen pressure on the surgery site. Using this cushion lets more blood flow to the area to help with healing . If recommended, keep in mind:
 - › Cushions vary in size and price.
 - › They may be made of foam or filled with air.
 - › You can buy cushions at local pharmacies and medical suppliers such as Lawtons Home HealthCare, Shoppers Drug Mart, or Walmart. If it has been recommended for you, buy one before your surgery if you can.

Meals

- Eat your usual meals when you feel well enough.
- For the first 4 weeks after surgery, a low-fibre diet is recommended along with taking stool softeners. This will help make sure your stool is soft enough to pass. After the 4 week period, a high-fibre diet is recommended. Foods high in fibre will help you to have regular bowel movements. Foods high in fibre include breads and muffins made with whole flour, bran, raw fruits and raw vegetables.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

Activity

You may go back to your usual activities the day after your surgery when you feel comfortable doing so.

Other important points

- If needed, a followup appointment may have been booked for you **OR** you may have to call your doctor's office to make this appointment. You will be advised before going home.
- It is very important not to become constipated. Take Metamucil® (30 ml) once or twice a day to keep your bowel movements soft if needed. It is also very important to drink plenty of water while taking Metamucil® or you may become constipated. Follow the directions on the Metamucil® package. Take a laxative (Clearlax™, Restoralax®, Magnolax®, Lax-a-day®) once or twice a day if you become constipated.

- A small amount of bleeding is normal after your surgery especially when your bowels move. Call your doctor if the bleeding increases. You may want to wear a sanitary pad to protect your clothing. This can be held in place by your underwear.
- Do not ignore the urge to move your bowels, but do not strain. Taking a pain pill when you feel you are going to have a bowel movement may be helpful.

Call your surgeon or family doctor if you:

- Have fever or chills; this could mean you have an infection.
- Are unable to have a bowel movement in a day or two.
- Are unable to pass your urine (pee) after surgery.

**If your surgeon or family doctor is not available,
go to your closest Emergency Department.**

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

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For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

Nova Scotia Health Authority

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If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.