Colectomy (Colon, Removal of)
Care Before and After Surgery

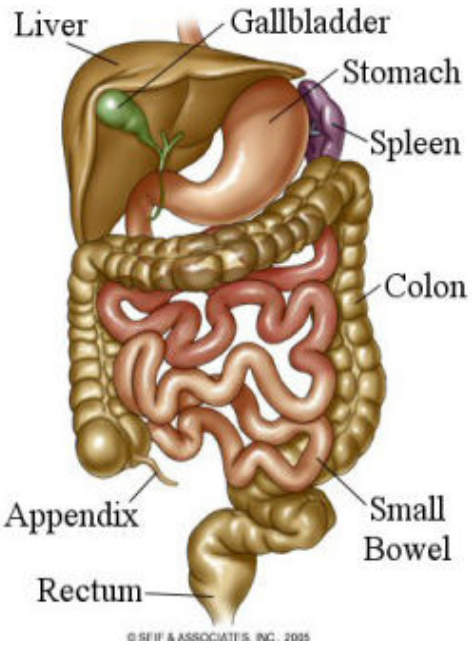
A partial or total colectomy is the removal of part or all of your colon. This is most often done under a general anesthetic so that you are sleeping during the procedure. Following the procedure, you will be taken to a recovery room. Once you have recovered from the anesthetic you will be returned to your room.

BEFORE SURGERY LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies
- Medications taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medications, and creams
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams)
- Previous problems with anesthetics or Novocaine
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies
- History of blood clots (*thrombophlebitis*)
- History of bleeding or blood problems
- Previous surgery
- Other health problems

AFTER YOUR SURGERY

After surgery, you will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will watch you and check your progress. After the recovery area you will go to your hospital room. Your surgeon will determine when it is alright for you to take fluids and foods. You will be given pain medicine to keep you comfortable.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER YOUR SURGERY

- Once home an ice pack applied to the operative site may help with discomfort and keep swelling down.
- Change dressings as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- You may continue normal diet and activities as directed.
- There should be no heavy lifting (more than 10 pounds), strenuous activities or contact sports for three weeks, or as directed.
- Keep the wound dry and clean. The wound may be washed gently with soap and water. Gently blot or dab dry following cleansing without rubbing. Do not take baths, use swimming pools or use hot tubs for ten days, or as instructed by your caregivers.
- If you have a colostomy, care for it as you have been shown.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound area.
- Pus is coming from the wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 101ºF (38.3º C) develops.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- There is a breaking open of a *wound* (edges not staying together) after the sutures have been removed.
- There is increasing abdominal pain.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- A rash develops
- There is difficulty breathing, or development of a reaction or side effects to medications given.

Document Released: 09/21/2005 Document Re-Released: 03/16/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.