Hemorrhoidectomy, Care After Surgery

Hemorrhoidectomy is the removal of enlarged *(dilated*) veins around the rectum. Until the surgical areas are healed, pain and avoiding constipation are the greatest problems for patients.

Expect to feel dizzy, weak, and drowsy for as long as 24 hours after receiving an *anesthetic* (the medication that made you sleep). The following information applies to the first 24-hour period.

- Do not drive a car, ride a bicycle, participate in activities in which you could be hurt. Do not take public transportation until you are not taking narcotic pain medications and until your caregiver says it is okay.
- Do not drink alcohol, take tranquilizers, or medications not prescribed or allowed by your surgical caregiver.
- Do not sign important papers or contracts for at least 24 hours or while taking narcotic medications.
- Have a responsible person with you for 24 hours.

COMPLICATIONS

Some problems that occur following this procedure include:

- Infection. A germ starts growing in the tissue surrounding the site operated on. This can usually be treated with antibiotics.
- Damage to the rectal sphincter could occur. This is the muscle that opens in your anus to allow a bowel movement. This could cause incontinence. This is uncommon.
- Bleeding following surgery can be a complication of almost any surgery. Your surgeon takes every precaution to keep this from happening.
- Complications of anesthesia.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING SURGERY

- Avoid straining when having bowel movements.
- Avoid heavy lifting (more than 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms)).
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Take hot sitz baths for 20 to 30 minutes, 3 to 4 times per day.
- To keep swelling down, apply an ice pack for twenty minutes three to four times per day between sitz baths. Use a towel between your skin and the ice pack. Do not do this if it causes too much discomfort.
- Keep anal area dry and clean following sitz baths or having a bowel movement. Following a bowel movement, you can gently wash the area with tucks or cotton swabs. Gently pat the area dry. Do not rub the wounds.
- Eat a well balanced diet and drink 6 to 8 glasses of water every day to avoid constipation. A bulk laxative may be used. This is especially important if you are on narcotics for pain as these medications tend to be very constipating.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have increasing pain and swelling not controlled with medication.
- You are unable to eat or drink.
- You develop nausea or vomiting.
- You develop uncontrolled bleeding such as soaking two to three pads in one hour.
- You have constipation, not helped by changing your diet or increasing your fluid intake. Pain medications are a common cause of constipation.
- You have pain or soreness and redness *(inflammation*) extending outside the area of your surgery such as into your buttocks.
- You have chills and or an oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C) develop, and last for 2 days or longer, or as instructed by your caregiver.
- You have difficulty breathing or have a congested sounding (*croupy*) cough.
- You have increasing pain or tenderness near or in the cut from surgery (*incision*).

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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