



Elizabeth Bonefas, M.D., F.A.C.S.
General Surgery and Diseases of the Breast

Ventral or Umbilical Hernia Repair

Post-Operative Instructions

Elizabeth Bonefas, M.D., F.A.C.S. and Kelly L. Birt, M.D.

Diet: You may resume a solid diet as soon as you are hungry. Constipation is common when taking narcotics. Eating a high fiber diet, drinking plenty of water, and taking a mild laxative, such as prune juice or milk of magnesia will help.

Wound Care: You may **shower** 24 hours after surgery. If you have a dressing, remove the gauze dressing before showering and leave it off if there is no drainage. Do not remove the tape strips on the skin or skin glue. Avoid bathing or swimming for two weeks. One may notice some swelling or bruising of the abdominal wall. This is normal unless it is associated with a large swelling (golfball sized). Call the office if you have a large swelling, or if there are any signs of infection such as pain, redness, or persistent drainage.

Activity: You should resume *normal* activities as soon as your pain will allow (dinner engagements, gardening, shopping, etc.). Take a walk at least three times a day, starting the day after surgery. Climbing stairs is not harmful. You may return to work at your own discretion, however, avoid lifting anything heavier than a gallon of milk. Refrain from heavy exercise (bicycling, running, aerobics, weight lifting, sit-ups, etc.) or sexual intercourse until your follow-up visit. Generally, you may return to these activities in three to six weeks. Do not drive or operate heavy machinery for 5 to 7 days after surgery or until you are completely pain free, off narcotics and are not hindered in any way.

Medication: You will get a prescription for a mild narcotic painkiller, such as Vicodin or Norco. Start with one every four hours and increase to two if that doesn't help. Take the pills with food. If they make you nauseated, try extra strength Tylenol or Advil. If it persists, call the office for a new prescription. Beware of taking the maximum dose of pain medication along with Tylenol, as many of these have acetaminophen in them.

Follow-up: Call the office at **713-756-8555** to make a follow-up appointment in our office for 7 to 10 days after surgery.

Emergency: If you have any problems or questions, do not hesitate to call the office number. After hours, it will give you the answering service who will contact the on-call doctor. The on-call doctor will return your call shortly. Call if you have severe pain, persistent vomiting, fever greater than 101 degrees, or diarrhea more than 6 times in 24 hours. If it is an extreme emergency, please go directly to the closest emergency room.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of providing your surgical care.