

Make sure that you eat regular meals three or more times a day and that you take regular walks during the first two weeks after surgery.

If you are passing loose stools more than three times a day for more than four days we advise that you take medication such as loperamide, lomotil or codeine phosphate. If you are constipated for more than three to four days, taking a laxative is recommended. Your GP can prescribe these for you if needed.

Passing urine

Sometimes after bowel surgery you may experience a feeling that your bladder is not emptying completely. This usually resolves itself with time. If it does not or if you have excessive stinging when passing urine, please contact us on the number on the previous page as you may have an infection.

Diet

A healthy, varied diet is recommended. Make sure you eat regular meals three or more times a day. You may find some foods cause looseness of your bowels. If this is the case, you should avoid these foods for the first few weeks following your surgery. If you are finding it difficult to eat, it is very important to obtain an adequate intake of protein and calories.

You should have three to four protein drinks a day to supplement your food. These can include all the protein drinks you tried before surgery or Build-Up or Complan. If you have diarrhoea, it is important to replace the fluid loss and to drink extra liquid. If you feel that this is excessive, please contact us as you may need a special fluid to replace salts.

Exercise

Activity is encouraged from the first day after your operation. You should take regular exercise several times a day, for example, walking. Gradually increase your exercise during the four weeks following your operation until you are back to your normal level of activity. Do not undertake heavy lifting until six weeks after surgery. If you are planning to jog or swim, wait until two weeks and then start gradually. Common sense will guide your exercise and rehabilitation. If your wound is uncomfortable, go easy with your exercise. Once your wound is pain free, you can undertake most activities.

You need to wear your anti-thrombosis stockings/socks for two weeks after going home.

Work

Many people are able to return to work within two to four weeks after their operation. If your job involves heavy, manual labour, do not return to work until six weeks afterwards.

Driving

Do not drive until you are confident that you can drive safely. It is best to check with your insurance company before you start driving again.

Hobbies/activities

In general, you can take up your hobbies and activities as soon as possible after surgery. This will benefit your convalescence. However, do not do anything that causes significant pain or involves heavy lifting for six weeks after your operation.

Contact numbers:

After the operation

Mersea Ward

Tel: 01206 746252.

Colorectal Nurse

Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

Tel: 01206 742356, or 01206 747474 and ask switchboard to bleep 944

Laparoscopic Nurse Practitioner

07768 145118 Monday to Thursday 8am till 6pm.

Outside of these hours please phone the hospital switchboard on 01206 747474 and ask for the surgical on-call registrar.

When you leave hospital

Complications do not happen very often but it is important that you know what to look out for.

If you are worried about any of the issues described in this leaflet during the first two weeks after your operation, **please phone 01206 747474 and ask for bleep 924** – not your GP.

Abdominal pain

You may suffer gripping pains during the first week after your operation. This pain usually lasts up to a few minutes and will go away completely between spasms. Severe pain that lasts for several hours may indicate leakage of fluid from the area where the bowel has been joined together. This can be a serious complication that, fortunately, happens only rarely. Should this occur, it may be accompanied by a fever. Sometimes leakage may occur which makes you feel generally unwell with a fever but without pain.

If you have severe pain lasting more than one to two hours or have a fever and feel generally unwell, you should contact us on the number above.

Your wound

It is not unusual for your wound to be slightly red and uncomfortable during the first one to two weeks.

Please let us know if your wound is:

- becoming inflamed, painful or swollen
- starting to discharge fluid.

Your bowels

Your bowels are likely to be erratic in the first few weeks after your operation. Your motions may be loose and frequent or you may become constipated.

Notes

Verifying your identity

When you attend hospital you will be asked to confirm your first and last name, date of birth, postcode and NHS number if you know it, and to let us know if you have any allergies.

Comments, compliments or complaints about your care?

Please call PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on freephone 0800 783 7328, pick up a leaflet or visit www.colchesterhospital.nhs.uk

Your views

If you or a family member has recently been in Colchester General Hospital, you can tell us about your experience by searching for 'Colchester' on the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk, by writing to the address on the front of this leaflet, by emailing your comments to info@colchesterhospital.nhs.uk or by filling in a questionnaire at the hospital telling us if you would recommend our service to a friend or family member.

Enhanced Recovery Programme

Colorectal Department
 Colchester General Hospital
 Turner Road
 Colchester
 CO4 5JL

Tel: 01206 742356

Discharge information

Please ask if you require this leaflet in an alternative format.

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Kind
Caring
 Welcoming

Involving
Communication
 Responsive

Professional
Consistency
 Be the difference

