

Post-Op Recovery Guide – (Open Ventral Hernia Repair)

Diet

- **Start Slow:** Let your appetite guide you; do not force food if you aren't hungry.
- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of liquids to stay hydrated.
- **Nausea:** Stick to clear liquids if you feel nauseous, then move to easily digestible foods.
- **Prevent Strain:** Focus on high-fiber foods and water to keep stools soft, as straining during bowel movements can pressure the repair.

Activity

- **Movement:** Walk frequently (at least 5 times daily) to help healing and prevent blood clots.
- **Rest:** Take it easy, but do not stay in bed all day; change positions regularly.
- **Stairs:** You may walk and use stairs as usual, but take them slowly.
- **Lifting/Exercise:** Avoid heavy lifting (usually anything over 10 lbs) or vigorous exercise for 4–6 weeks.
- **Driving:** Do not drive for 48–72 hours or while taking narcotic pain medication.

Pain Control

- **Binder Use:** Wear your abdominal binder as instructed by your surgeon. It should be snug but comfortable enough to breathe deeply. It provides support when moving, coughing, or sneezing.
- **Medication:** Take prescribed medications exactly as instructed.
- **Pain Meds:** Do not take pain medicine on an empty stomach.
- **Ice:** Use cold packs 3–4 times daily for 20 minutes during the first 2 days to help with swelling.
- **Splinting:** If you need to cough or sneeze, hold a pillow (or your binder) firmly against the incision to reduce pain.

Wound Care & Showering

- **Showering:** You may shower within 24–48 hours after surgery. Let water run over incisions; do not scrub.
- **No Soaking:** Do not use baths, jacuzzis, or pools until cleared by your doctor.
- **Dressings:** Do not peel off surgical glue (Dermabond) or white tapes (Steri-strips); they will fall off on their own.
- **Bruising:** It is normal for the surgical site and surrounding skin to turn black and blue.

When to Call for Help

Call the Clinic (661) 219-2643 if you have:

- Fever over 100.4°F.
- Drainage, pus, or increasing redness/warmth around your incisions.
- Pain that gets worse even after taking your medication.
- No bowel movement for more than 2–3 days.

Call 911 or go to the ER for:

- Chest pain or shortness of breath.
- Severe leg swelling or pain.
- Fainting or loss of consciousness.
- Continuous vomiting or inability to keep any liquids down.

Follow-Up: If you don't have an appointment, call the office within 1–2 days at **661-219-2643**.