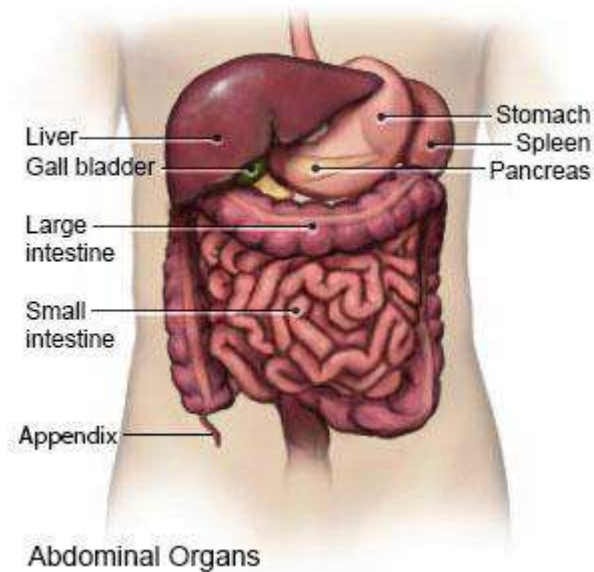


## Colectomy

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

A colectomy is surgery to remove part or all of your colon.



### DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS:

**Call your local emergency number (911 in the US) if:**

- You feel lightheaded, short of breath, or have chest pain.
- You cough up blood.

**Seek care immediately if:**

- Your arm or leg feels warm, tender, and painful. It may look swollen and red.
- Blood soaks through your bandage.
- Your stitches come apart.
- You have severe pain.
- You are unable to have a bowel movement or pass gas.
- Your abdomen is swollen and hard.
- You cannot eat without vomiting.

- You see blood in your bowel movement or on your toilet paper.

**Call your doctor or surgeon if:**

- You have a fever.
- Your wound is red, swollen, or draining pus.
- You have nausea or are vomiting.
- You have trouble urinating or feel burning when you urinate.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.

**Medicines:** You **may** need any of the following:

- **Bowel movement softeners** make it easier for you to have a bowel movement. You may need this medicine to prevent constipation.
- **Blood thinners** help prevent blood clots. Clots can cause strokes, heart attacks, and death. The following are general safety guidelines to follow while you are taking a blood thinner:
  - Watch for bleeding and bruising while you take blood thinners. Watch for bleeding from your gums or nose. Watch for blood in your urine and bowel movements. Use a soft washcloth on your skin, and a soft toothbrush to brush your teeth. This can keep your skin and gums from bleeding. If you shave, use an electric shaver. Do not play contact sports.
  - Tell your dentist and other healthcare providers that you take a blood thinner. Wear a bracelet or necklace that says you take this medicine.
  - Do not start or stop any other medicines unless your healthcare provider tells you to. Many medicines cannot be used with blood thinners.
  - Take your blood thinner exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider. Do not skip doses or take less than prescribed. Tell your provider right away if you forget to take your blood thinner, or if you take too much.
  - **Warfarin** is a blood thinner that you **may** need to take. The following are things you should be aware of if you take warfarin:
    - Foods and medicines can affect the amount of warfarin in your blood. Do not make major changes to your diet while you take warfarin. Warfarin works best when you eat about the same amount of vitamin K every day. Vitamin K is found in green leafy vegetables and certain other foods. Ask for more information about what to eat when you are taking warfarin.

- You will need to see your healthcare provider for follow-up visits when you are on warfarin. You will need regular blood tests. These tests are used to decide how much medicine you need.
- **Antibiotics** help prevent an infection caused by bacteria.
- **Prescription pain medicine** may be given. Ask your healthcare provider how to take this medicine safely. Some prescription pain medicines contain acetaminophen. Do not take other medicines that contain acetaminophen without talking to your healthcare provider. Too much acetaminophen may cause liver damage. Prescription pain medicine may cause constipation. Ask your healthcare provider how to prevent or treat constipation.
- **Take your medicine as directed.** Contact your healthcare provider if you think your medicine is not helping or if you have side effects. Tell him or her if you are allergic to any medicine. Keep a list of the medicines, vitamins, and herbs you take. Include the amounts, and when and why you take them. Bring the list or the pill bottles to follow-up visits. Carry your medicine list with you in case of an emergency.

**Eat a variety of low-fiber foods:** Low-fiber, or low-residue, foods are easy to digest. Good choices include eggs, white bread, creamy peanut butter, and macaroni. This will help slow down your bowel movements and prevent trauma to your colon. Do not eat whole-wheat breads or pastas, raw fruits or vegetables, or nuts.

**Return to your daily activities as directed:** It may take 2 or 3 weeks to return to your usual activities. You may need to avoid lifting anything over 20 pounds for 6 weeks.

**Follow up with your doctor or surgeon as directed:** You may need to return for tests or to have your stitches or staples removed. Write down your questions so you remember to ask them during your visits.

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