

## **After Your Laparoscopic Hiatal Hernia Repair**

### **AMBULATORY CARE:**

#### **Seek care immediately if:**

- You feel lightheaded, short of breath, and have chest pain.
- You cough up blood.
- Your arm or leg feels warm, tender, and painful. It may look swollen and red.
- Blood soaks through your bandage.
- You have pus or a foul-smelling odor coming from your incision.
- Your bowel movements are black, bloody, or tarry-looking.
- Your vomit looks like coffee grounds or has blood in it.
- You develop shortness of breath or you begin to wheeze.

#### **Contact your healthcare provider if:**

- You have a fever above 101° F (or 100° F if you are older than 65 years).
- You develop a skin rash, hives, or itching.
- You have nausea, or you are vomiting.
- You have bloating or pain that does not improve.
- You have trouble swallowing that does not improve.
- You have heartburn symptoms.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.

#### **Medicines:**

- **Medicine** may be given to decrease pain. Ask your healthcare provider how to take prescription pain medicine safely. You may also need to take medicines to decrease or block stomach acid.
- **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.

**Follow up with your healthcare provider as directed:** Write down your questions so you remember to ask them during your visits.

#### **Nutrition:**

- **Eat soft foods as directed.** You may need to eat soft foods for up to 4 weeks after surgery. Examples of soft foods include mashed potatoes, pudding, custard, and milkshakes.
- **Avoid drinks and foods that produce gas.** It may be hard for you to burp to release air in your stomach. Avoid high-fat foods and carbonated beverages such as soda. Avoid chewing gum and drinking with a straw. Eat and drink slowly, and chew your food well.

**Wound care:** Care for your wound as directed. Carefully wash the wound with soap and water. Dry the area and put on new, clean bandages as directed. Change your bandages when they get wet or dirty. If you have steristrips covering your wound, do not remove them. They will come off on their own. Do not get in a bathtub, swimming pool or, hot tub until your healthcare provider says it is okay.

**Deep breathing:** Take deep breaths and cough 10 times each hour. This will decrease your risk for a lung infection. Take a deep breath and hold it for as long as you can. Let the air out and then cough strongly. Deep breaths help open your airway. You may be given an incentive spirometer to help you take deep breaths. Put the plastic piece in your mouth and take a slow, deep breath, then let the air out and cough. Repeat these steps 10 times every hour.

**Activity:** Do not drive for a week after your surgery. Do not lift heavy objects. Ask your healthcare provider when you can return to your daily activities.

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