

Robotic Prostatectomy - After Surgery

Here are general guidelines for your recovery after your surgery. Your doctor may give you other instructions based on your care needs. If you have a problem or questions call your doctor's office.

What can I expect after surgery?

- You will go home with a urinary catheter (also called a foley catheter). This tube is inserted through your penis and into your bladder to help the surgical connection (anastomosis) between your urethra and bladder heal. Sutures (stitches) hold the end of your urethra and bladder together.
 - ▶ For comfort, you may put K-Y Jelly on the tip of your penis and on the catheter tubing a couple times each day. **Do not** use Vaseline.
 - ▶ If you see blood in your urine, drink more fluids to help flush out any clots.
 - ▶ Always keep your drainage bag lower than your bladder.
 - ▶ Your catheter will be removed 5 to 7 days after your surgery.
 - ▶ After your catheter is removed you may have blood or dark flecks in your urine after activity. This may last for 4 to 6 weeks.
- Some of the gas used to inflate your abdomen during your robotic-assisted surgery may remain after the procedure. This can cause pain in one or both of your shoulders. This pain will go away in a few days. Walking will help your body absorb the gas and ease the pain.
- You may feel intense cramping in your lower abdomen (belly) and penis. You may feel the urge to urinate (pee) or to have a bowel movement when these cramps happen. These spasms normally get better over time.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

- There may also be urine leakage around the catheter. Most of your urine should drain in the collection bag. You may find it helpful to put an absorbent pad in your underwear to help soak up any urine that leaks.
- Your scrotum may swell after surgery. It may get as big as a grapefruit or softball. This is normal and will slowly go away after your catheter is removed. You can lessen the swelling by putting a rolled towel under your scrotum when you are sitting or lying down. Brief style underwear may also provide some support.

What can I eat and drink?

- For the first few days after surgery, eat small meals or snacks during the day, rather than 3 large meals.
- Drink plenty of water, at least 2 liters each day. Staying hydrated can also help lessen constipation.
- Greatly reduce the amount of tea, coffee and alcohol that you drink. These can irritate your bladder.

What activities can I do?

- **Do not** lift more than 15 pounds for 6 weeks. This is important when your urinary catheter is still in place. **Do not** push, bear down or strain when you have a bowel movement.
- Slowly increase your activity. Build up to the activity level you were at before your surgery. Plan periods of rest during the day. **Do not** strain or do too much activity.
- **Do not** stay in one position when sitting or lying down for more than 45 minutes, except when you are sleeping at night.
- You may shower after your surgery. You do not need to cover your surgical incisions when you shower. Gently wash the areas with soap and water and pat dry.
- **Do not** use bathtubs, swimming pools or hot tubs for 4 weeks after your surgery.
- **Do not** drive for at least 1 week after your surgery or until your urinary catheter has been removed. **Do not** drive if you are taking opioid pain medicine.
- **Do not** have sexual intercourse for 1 month after your surgery.

What care is needed for my surgical incisions?

- Your surgical incisions, called **port sites** will have special “glue” that holds them together. This glue will wear off in about 3 to 4 weeks
- There are no staples or stitches to be taken out. It is normal to have a small amount of drainage from your incisions.
- You may bruise around your incision site. Bruising can develop 1 to 5 days after your surgery and should go away over time.

What can I do to help reduce my pain?

- Before you leave the hospital, your doctor will give you a prescription for pain medicine. You may need to take this medicine for a few days at home to help with pain. Take your pain medicine with food.
- Continue to take a stool softener after your surgery. Some pain medicines can cause constipation. **Do not** push, bear down or strain when you have a bowel movement.
- To decrease your use of opioid pain medicine, you may take extra-strength Tylenol (500 mg acetaminophen) every 4 hours. Do not take more than 4000 mg of acetaminophen within a period of 24 hours. Do not take acetaminophen if you have liver problems or if your doctor instructed you not to.

Call your doctor if you have any of the following problems with your urinary catheter:

- Blood clots in your urine
- No urine output for 3 to 4 hours
- An increase in pain
- Your catheter is not draining urine
- An increase of blood in or around your urinary catheter
- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Nausea and vomiting

If your urinary catheter comes out, **do not** put the catheter back into your bladder. Call your doctor right away. Only a urologist should replace the catheter.