

## Common Post-Surgical Issues

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### Constipation

- Constipation is a common side effect of the prescription pain medication. Discontinue the medication as soon as possible.
- Reduce symptoms of constipation by:
  - Drinking fluids to stay hydrated (water or Gatorade). Prune juice is a natural laxative. Eat foods high in fiber. Increase physical activity.
  - Medication: Colace is a stool softener that can be purchased over the counter. Discuss with your pharmacist other medications that can help with constipation.

### Difficulty urinating

- This is a problem mostly seen in men because over time their prostate becomes larger and can block the normal flow of urine.
- If you are unable to void, you will need to go to the emergency room.
- In the emergency room, a catheter can be placed to relieve your bladder and medication can be started to correct the problem.

### Nausea

- Nausea is the result of anesthesia used during the surgery and narcotic pain medication.
- Start with soft, non-dairy, bland foods (Jell-O, clear broths, toast, cheerios, bananas, rice, applesauce, mashed potatoes, and saltine crackers). Gradually advance your diet as tolerated.
- If you are experiencing nausea or vomiting, stop solid foods. Continue non-carbonated liquids (Gatorade, water) to prevent dehydration. Take small sips at a time.
- If possible, limit the amount of pain medication to reduce the side effect of nausea.
- If you continue to have nausea/vomiting, then begin nausea medication that has been e-prescribed to your pharmacy.

### Removing skin prep

- Before surgery, the skin is prepped or sterilized to prevent infection.
- The orange or blue/green color will fade over time.
- Rubbing alcohol or soap and water can be used to help remove the discoloration.
- On rare occasions, contact dermatitis (small red bumps) is a reaction that can develop from the skin prep. Contact the office to schedule an appointment to remove the bandage. Over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream can minimize the irritation.

### Itching

- Many patients develop itching after surgery. Itching is due to a reaction to the anesthetic, adhesive tape, skin prep, pain medication, and/or antibiotics received before surgery.
- Do NOT attempt to scratch the skin under the bandage. Sticking objects down the bandage could cause a break in the skin, which could lead to an infection of the skin.
- Medication: Antihistamines (i.e. Zyrtec®, Claritin®) are anti-itch medications that can be purchased over the counter to lessen this symptom.
- If you develop a more severe allergic reaction such as wheezing, chest tightness, or shortness of breath, you should go to the emergency room immediately.

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**Scar Tissue**

- Over-the-counter products can be used to minimize scarring (Mederma®, Palmer's®, CeraVe®).
- Apply sunscreen to incision site(s) for one year to avoid sunburn (reduces redness).
- After the sutures are removed, massage the incision site to reduce scar tissue and minimize tenderness.