**Hernia Repair Postoperative Instructions**

Please note that these are generalized postoperative instructions.  Each surgical procedure and postoperative recovery are unique.  If you were given directions following surgery that differ from the ones stated below please follow the directions you were given after your surgery.  Please contact the office if you have any questions or concerns at (479) 705-2310.  
  
You may shower 24 hours after surgery and get your incision wet. Only clean with warm soapy water. Do not use alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.  If you had surgical glue adhesive applied over your incision this will peel off like a scab in 1-2 weeks.  If you do not have surgical glue adhesive keep a dressing on your wound for the 24 hours after surgery.  Following that 24-hour period you may remove the dressing for showering but replace after cleaning for the first 3-5 days or as long as there is any drainage.  After 2 weeks of healing, you may apply any topical ointment or cream as long as skin is healed and there are no open areas.  If you had an umbilical hernia repair (hernia at your belly button) you should leave your dressing on for 48 hours after surgery. Then you can remove the dressing and cotton balls.  Your incision is covered with surgical glue adhesive.  You may shower and get incision wet at this time. If the dressing comes off before the 48-hour mark this is ok.  
  
It is normal to have bruising and swelling in the area of your surgery. If you had an inguinal hernia repair this may extend into your scrotum or labia.  This is normal. You may apply cool compress or warm compress for discomfort depending on your preference.  
  
A few days after surgery you will notice the incision start to harden. This is a normal response to the surgery and dissolvable sutures used to close the skin incision.  This will soften and the scar will flatten out over the next 2 months.  
  
No heavy lifting over 10 pounds for at least 2 weeks after your surgery.  This includes no pushing and pulling. The 2-week time period may be extended for additional time and will be discussed at your first postoperative clinic visit.  A gallon of milk is approximately 8 pounds so this is a good guide of how much you can lift. Walking, going up stairs and other normal daily movements are encouraged as you tolerate them.  
  
You may return to a normal diet as you recover from anesthesia. Some people may have slight nausea after anesthesia so it is recommended to eat light meals in the hours following your surgery and return to regular diet the following day.   
  
You may not operate a vehicle for 24 hours following anesthesia.  After that you may drive when you are not under the influence of pain medication, can wear your seat belt, can turn from side to side to check mirrors and blind spots and have the strength to control the vehicle.