

Dr. Kovacev's Post Op Care Instructions

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The following instructions will provide helpful information that will assist your recovery. These are designed to be general guidelines. Remember, everyone recovers differently. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Kovacev. Having undergone surgery is a significant stress to your body on many levels. Your speedy recovery is dependent on many factors. The following are general guidelines for your recovery.

- Nutrition – If you have been placed on a special diet, you should continue this diet until instructed otherwise. It is very important that you maintain your caloric intake and proper amount of protein, carbs, fat, etc. Over the counter nutrition supplements such as Boost, Ensure or others are available and can be used 2-3 times per day as a supplement to your diet. A daily multivitamin may also be helpful. Do not drink alcohol until approved by Dr. Kovacev. Additionally you should follow your specific dietary recommendations discussed by Dr. Kovacev.
- Activity – Post operative activity is very important to optimal recovery as well. Getting up and out of bed (unless otherwise instructed) is an important step in recovery from surgery. The physical activity helps recover from surgery and speeds healing and overall health. Do not ambulate or put weight on an extremity if it was recently operated on until cleared formally by Dr. Kovacev. If it is possible, it is highly recommended that you have someone to help you during the initial post-operative period until you are recovered enough to be self-sufficient. Do not drive a car, operate machinery of any kind, or return to work until you are fully off all pain medication for greater than 24 continuous hours. Do not lift anything heavier than 10lbs or about the weight of a gallon of milk until approved by Dr. Kovacev. Generally you may increase your weight restriction by 10lbs per week until the 6 week mark at which point you should be on full duty.
- Pain Medication – If you have a prescription for pain medication, it may or may not be necessary depending on many factors such as type of surgery, your overall pain tolerance, prior exposure, etc. Do not drive a car, operate machinery of any kind, or return to work until you are fully off all pain medication for greater than 24 continuous hours. Do not combine any other over the counter pain medication with your prescription pain medication including but not limited to Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, Aspirin, etc. Pain medication can lead to nausea if taken on an empty stomach; therefore it is recommended to take with food. Additionally pain medication can cause constipation among other symptoms. If constipation occurs you can take an over the counter stool softener such as Colace, prunes, or other commercially available formulas. Do not take laxatives. If you feel you have a reaction to the pain medication or are concerned about a medication interaction, call the office immediately.

Wound Care – Your incision will likely be closed one of several ways, or it may require packing and specific wound care. If your wound is open, you will have received specific wound care instructions and the following will not apply to your situation. Otherwise your incision may have a skin glue, dressings, staples, or stitches. Cleanliness is of paramount importance. You may clean the area with antibacterial soap and water unless otherwise specified. If skin glue is present, you may scrub it off beginning 1 week after surgery. Staples and stitches are removed between 1 and 2 weeks after surgery. If you have a concern about your incision such as redness, drainage, odor, discoloration, or any other, please call the office ASAP.

Recovery from surgery is a complex series of events, and therefore these instructions are meant to be a generalized overview of routine post-operative recovery and are not meant to replace any specific recommendations by Dr. Kovacev. If you cannot reach our office, please go to Emergency Department or call EMS by dialing 911.

If you have any questions regarding your recovery, please call Dr. Kovacev's Office.