

## Frequently Asked Questions after Bariatric Surgery

### **What should I expect in regard to pain after surgery?**

During surgery, you will receive an abdominal wall nerve block to proactively help with discomfort. Pain is typical of other laparoscopic procedures. We use a multimodal pain regiment while in the hospital to help alleviate pain. You will be sent home with short course of narcotics to help relieve any pain at home. Tylenol may also be used at home. You will likely have pain in your shoulders for two or three days which is typical after laparoscopic surgeries as the CO2 gas is absorbed into the diaphragm and refers pain into the shoulders. This will resolve within a few days.

### **When can I shower/bathe?**

You may shower the evening of surgery. Band-Aids are okay to get wet in the shower, pat dry with a towel afterwards. Do not soak wounds. No baths or pools for two weeks after surgery.

### **How much water should I drink?**

Drink a minimum 60 oz of fluid a day. Initially, you will be consuming 2-3 oz every 15 minutes. This volume will slowly increase with the coming weeks. Before surgery, use a water bottle that has volume numbers on the side so that you can get a good account of your daily fluid intake to avoid dehydration.

### **Can I still take my medications?**

Yes. Your pills do not have to be crushed. Initially, we advised taking pills one at a time. Your larger pills may be difficult at first, but that usually resolves within a week.

### **How soon after surgery can I exercise?**

Light exercise can usually begin after two weeks. This includes long walks and stairs. More strenuous activity and heavy lifting may resume at four weeks postop.

### **When can I engage in sexual activity?**

Like strenuous activity, this must wait until four weeks.

### **How soon after surgery can I drive a car?**

You can typically drive two or three days post-operative. We encourage you to wait until you feel safe on the road. Absolutely no driving if you been taking narcotics for pain.

### **How much can I lift after surgery?**

At first, lifting is restricted to 15 lb. Avoid any lifting that causes pain in the abdomen. Full lifting is allowed after four weeks.

**When can I return to work?**

We typically recommend taking two weeks off to ensure that you are comfortable with your fluid intake and feel ready to return. For people who work from home or have very little activity requirements at work, one-week is okay. If you have any mandatory lifting requirements, you may return to work with light duty at two weeks. If light duty is not available, then you will need to wait until four weeks to return.

**Common Concerns:****Dizziness**

The most common complaint people have is dizziness due to dehydration and/or blood pressure dropping due to blood pressure meds. Maintain hydration drinking 2-3 oz every 15 minutes to avoid dehydration. If you feel dizzy, avoid your blood pressure meds and continue to maintain regular fluid intake. Call the office for IV fluid hydration appointment.

**Constipation**

Constipation can be very common for the first month. We recommend taking a stool softener or MiraLAX on a daily basis to ensure you have at least 1 bowel movement daily. Do not go more than two or three days without a bowel movement. This can lead to impaction and severe abdominal cramping and pain.

**When to go to the Emergency Room:**

- Severe uncontrolled abdominal pain that continues to get worse and is not controlled with home pain pills
- Sustained temperature greater than 101.5 associated with rapid heart rate and severe abdominal pain
- Severe shortness of breath or chest pain.
- Painful one-sided lower extremity swelling or redness, especially if associated with shortness of breath and rapid heart rate
- Severe vomiting that cannot be controlled with home nausea medication.