

Planning for Discharge

Following any surgery it is a good idea to have a friend or family member available to help you at home for at least a few days. You will need to call your doctor for a follow-up visit and arrange transportation to that appointment.

For the four to six weeks after surgery you should **AVOID**:

- **lifting, pushing or pulling heavy weights** (including laundry, furniture, vacuums, and children if possible) to prevent straining your internal incisions.
- **getting overtired** as you will tire easily. (Try alternating activities such as walking with periods of rest.)

For your general hygiene and comfort, showers are preferred over baths to promote healing.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, call your doctor or clinic immediately, or report to the nearest Emergency Department:

- severe pain.
- excessive bright bleeding or a foul smelling discharge.
- persistent nausea or vomiting.
- feeling hot or feverish with a temperature over 38° Celsius.
- inability to void.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask your doctor, nurse or any other member of the health care team.

This pamphlet was developed by the preadmission nurse clinician in consultation with the preadmission nurses, the surgical clinical resource nurses, and nursing unit staff.

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Preadmission information for

Laparotomy

**Burnaby Hospital
Preadmission Clinic**

What is a Laparotomy?

A *laparotomy* is an opening made through the abdominal wall into the peritoneal cavity. This is necessary to repair or remove traumatized tissue, cure a disease process by organ removal or to examine or visualize internal organs for diagnosis.

Your hospital stay may be up to 3 days depending upon the final surgical procedure carried out by your surgeon.

At Home The Night Before Surgery

- 1) You will need a “Fleet“ enema to cleanse your bowels. You may buy this at a local pharmacy. Follow the package instructions yourself or have a family member assist you.
- 2) Do not eat or drink after midnight, unless otherwise advised by your doctor.
- 3) Take a shower or bath using soap and water, unless otherwise advised by your doctor.

In Hospital Before Surgery

1. You will have an intravenous for fluid replacement and medications.
2. You may have medications to reduce stomach secretions.
3. You may have a urinary catheter inserted to drain your bladder while you are on the nursing unit or in the operating room.

What to Expect After Surgery

- You will wake up in the recovery room.
- To help control your pain, you may have a patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) machine.
- Your incision will be closed with a self-dissolving suture or skin staples.
- You may have a drain inserted near the incision to promote healing.
- You may also be given glycerine suppositories for constipation.
- You will start doing post-operative exercises immediately. Your activity level will increase as tolerated.

- Your intravenous will be removed when you are drinking well or passing gas.
- You will initially be given sips of water, then clear fluids, then a regular diet as you desire.
- The urinary catheter is usually removed the day of surgery.