

# **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

## **FOLLOWING RECTAL SURGERY**

1. **NORMALIZING BOWEL FUNCTION.** You must begin to have normal bowel movements. After surgery, you may have to strain a little in order to have your first bowel movement. If necessary, take a pain pill 30 minutes before sitting on the toilet to ease any discomfort associated with bowel movements.

If you do not have a bowel movement within two days following surgery, then try a Fleets® mineral oil enema, immediately followed by a Fleets® saline (sodium phosphate) enema (at the same time). If you are physically unable to use the enemas (due to pain), then take magnesium hydroxide (Milk Of Magnesia) instead. If you do not have a bowel movement within three days following surgery, then please notify our office.

2. **BLEEDING.** It may be considered normal to have some blood in your stool with a bowel movement after surgery. If you pass two or more ounces of blood/per day with a bowel movement – please alert your physician. If you pass six or more ounces of blood/per day with a bowel movement, please alert your physician and go directly to the emergency room.

3. **KEEP THE RECTAL AREA CLEAN AND DRY.** After a bowel movement, clean your bottom with peri-anal cleansing pads (i.e. Tucks® or **baby-wipes**), followed by blotting the area dry with white unscented toilet paper. Change your dressing after each bowel movement, or whenever soiling occurs.

Dressing: A piece of cotton (from a **cotton roll**) or non-sterile 4x4 gauze pads, placed between your buttocks and held with white paper tape, will help keep the area dry. A sanitary napkin worn inside your underwear can also help absorb excess drainage. Dressing the anal area does not effect healing, but will help to keep your underwear and bedding clean and dry.

4. A sitz bath (warm water bath) several times a day will give you soothing relief. Ice the area for 10–15 min (an ice cube in a Ziploc bag works fine) at least 2 – 3 times a day for 2 to 5 days after surgery, to reduce swelling and aid in healing.
5. **CALL OUR OFFICE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.** We would like to see you in approximately 30 days from the date of your operation if you have any symptoms that are not improving; or earlier if your condition has worsened.
6. **TAKE YOUR MEDICINE AS PRESCRIBED.**

**Hydrocortisone/Proxamine:** For swelling, inflammation, and itching of the anal tissue. Important: use hydrocortisone cream and or suppositories several times a day until you are healed. This will shorten your healing time by as much as 50%.  
**Hydromorphone/Hydrocodone/Codeine:** For pain. Do not drink or drive on this medication.

**Casanthranol/Docusate/Senna/Magnesium hydroxide:** To soften the stool and gently stimulate a bowel movement.