

David C. Saypol, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.S.
Arthur R. Israel, M.D., F.A.C.S.
David C. Chaikin, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Perry M. Sutaria, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Lee B. Pressler, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Eric K. Seaman, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Michele R. Clement, M.D.*
* Pediatric Urology

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261 James Street, Suite 1A
Morristown, NJ 07960
973.539.1050
Fax 973.538.6111
www.muani.com

95 Madison Avenue, Suite 302
Morristown, NJ 07960
973.656.0600
Fax 973.656.0200

POSTOPERATIVE PATIENT INFORMATION: KIDNEY SURGERY

Your normal diet and medications can be resumed immediately. A healthy and balanced diet with abundant fruit, vegetables and fiber will facilitate healing and help prevent bowel difficulties. Bathing and showering are permissible. Most daily activities can be resumed as well; in fact, walking and stair climbing are desirable and beneficial. Any non-strenuous activity is permissible as long as pain is not experienced. If you do experience pain with activities, it is a signal to ease up. It is important to avoid lifting heavy objects and strenuous exercise for about four weeks. In general, you can resume work within several weeks, sooner if you have a sedentary occupation.

Prior to being discharged, you will be given a prescription for pain medication. The pain medication can be used on an as needed basis. It should be noted that narcotic pain medications have many untoward side effects including nausea, constipation, and a general feeling of "unwellness." If you are experiencing such symptoms, it may be beneficial to switch to an over the counter anti-inflammatory such as Motrin or Advil.

Flank and abdominal discomfort are to be expected for several weeks, particularly with coughing and any activity that requires the use of the flank and abdominal muscles, including sitting up, turning your torso, bending, etc. It is normal to note bruising and swelling adjacent to the incisional site. You may also note flabbiness and flaccidity of the flank muscles causing an asymmetry when you look in the mirror. This should improve as the muscles heal and regain their tone, although there may be a permanent subtle flank bulge.

The combination of undergoing a surgical procedure, anesthesia, and pain medication often leads to constipation. It is thus recommended that you immediately start on a stool softener such as Colace 100 mg twice daily, in an effort to preclude constipation. Remember, the more pain pills you take, the more likely you are to develop a bowel problem. Therefore, you have to carefully consider the benefit of the pain pill versus the bowel side effects. If you have not moved your bowels on the Colace regimen by the day following surgery, you may take a 10 mg. Dulcolax rectal suppository, which may be repeated within one hour if no response. All of the aforementioned are available without prescription at any pharmacy.

It is imperative that you be followed carefully in the post-operative period. Most patients are seen approximately 2 weeks after their surgery, again at 12 weeks after their surgery, and one year following the surgery. Please call the office for a follow up visit, specifying that it is a "post-operative" office visit.