

## Follow-up Visit

Call Dr. FitzHarris' office at 757-827-2202 to make your postoperative visit appointment as described in your discharge instructions.

## Questions

If you have any concerns, please call the office at 757-827-2202. If you have problems outside of office hours or on the weekend, your call will be forwarded to the answering service and the on-call Dominion Surgical surgeon. If you cannot wait, please go to the Emergency Room.



Dr. Gregory P. FitzHarris, FACS, FASCRS  
*Colon and Rectal Surgery*

## Dominion Surgical

### CarePlex Hospital Medical Arts Building

Hampton River Entrance  
4000 Coliseum Drive, Suite 320  
Hampton, VA 23666

Mon. - Fri., 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Phone 757-827-2202

Fax: 757-827-2207

### Port Warwick II (ASC)

1031 Loftis Boulevard  
Newport News, VA 23606

Mon. - Fri., 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Phone 757-827-2202

Fax: 757-827-2207



[www.sentara.com](http://www.sentara.com)

Your community, not-for-profit health partner.

# Dominion Surgical Instructions After Anal and Rectal Surgery



Dr. Gregory P. FitzHarris, FACS, FASCRS  
*Colon and Rectal Surgery*



# Dominion Surgical Instructions after Anal and Rectal Surgery

**All patients wonder what to expect and what to do and not to do after surgery. This brochure provides answers to many of those questions in a single, easy-to-reference place. While each patient is different, following these basic guidelines will help ease the recovery process.**

## Diet

The evening after your surgery, start with a light meal. Add fiber back into your diet gradually, adding more or less based on your body's comfort level. Always drink plenty of fluids. You will know you're on the right track when your urine is almost clear.

## Medications

Unless you have a history of ulcers or pronounced diabetes, you may take 400-800 milligrams of Motrin every 8 hours while you are experiencing significant pain. Be sure to always take the pills with food or milk in your stomach.

Your prescription narcotic (Percocet, Darvocet, Vicodin) should be used only as directed. If it causes your stools to be hard, taking an over-the-counter stool softener (like Surfak or Colace) will help.

Continue to use all your usual medications as normal unless directed otherwise.

## Activity

After surgery, pay close attention to how you feel and let that guide how much or how little physical activity you engage in.



Strenuous exercise and heavy lifting should be avoided for 3 weeks unless directed otherwise. However, climbing stairs, walking, and traveling in the car are perfectly fine. Simply avoid driving until you are off narcotics.

Sexual activity should be avoided until you are fully healed, at which point there should be no discomfort. Return to work when you feel comfortable enough.

## Wound Care

If possible, leave your bandage on until the morning after surgery. If you must remove it to have a bowel movement or if the bandage gets soiled, that is ok.

When you do first remove the bandage, also remove any packing gauze inside the wound. The best way to do this is in a shower or tub during a sitz bath. A sitz bath refers to soaking in warm water in a tub or basin for 10-15 minutes.

After your sitz bath, you should recover the wound with a bandage; however, there is no need to repack the wound. This may be done with a panty liner or MaxiPad. Tight underwear or tape may be used to keep the bandage in place.

Going forward, you should plan to take 3 or 4 sitz baths a day, including one after any bowel movements. You may do more if they help with pain control.

As the wound heals and you feel better, the number of sitz baths may be reduced. You should continue to take them after bowel movements, though, until directed otherwise at your post-operative appointment.

## Bowel Habits

As might be expected, bowel movements will be uncomfortable for a time after surgery. Bleeding and discomfort will improve as healing progresses. Use baby wipes to clean after bowel movements.

If you do not have a bowel movement for 2 days after surgery, take 1 ounce (30cc) of Milk of Magnesia each night until you do. You should not use an enema unless specifically directed by your doctor.

If Milk of Magnesia does not work after 2 days, take 4 Dulcolax tablets by mouth at one time. If this too does not work within 12 hours, call the office to consult with a nurse or doctor.

## Problems

As mentioned above, some **bleeding** with bowel movements may be expected. However, if continuous bleeding occurs or clots are repeatedly and frequently passed, call the office to consult with a nurse or doctor.

You may also experience **difficulty urinating** initially, but it is important to do so the day of your surgery. If you are unable to urinate, because urine is sterile, you may try to do so while in a sitz bath without hurting the wound. If you continue to be unsuccessful though you feel you must urinate, immediately come to the Emergency Room. If needed, the staff there will have a catheter placed to drain your urine.