

## Post Op Instructions for Open Splenectomy

Your doctor performed an open splenectomy, the surgical removal of your spleen through a single incision in your abdomen. Located in the upper left portion of your abdomen, your spleen stored red blood cells, filtered your blood and helped your body fight infection. Here's what you need to do at home following an open splenectomy.

### Activity

- Increase your activity gradually. Take short walks on a level surface.
- Don't overexert yourself to the point of fatigue. If you become tired, rest.
- Climb steps slowly and stop to rest every few steps.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 10kg or push a vacuum cleaner for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Don't drive until after your first doctor's appointment after your surgery.
- If you ride in a car for more than short trips, stop frequently to stretch your legs.
- Ask your doctor about when you can expect to return to work.

### Preventing Infection

- Remember, you have a higher risk of infection because you don't have a spleen.
- Talk to your doctor about vaccines as you will be more prone to infection after surgery. Most people who have elective splenectomy get vaccinations against encapsulated bacteria before surgery. These vaccinations need to be updated every 5 -10 years.
- Get medical attention even for mild illnesses such as sinus problems or colds.
- Take antibiotic medication after surgery as directed by your doctor.
- Be sure to tell all your healthcare providers (dentist, primary care doctor, nurse practitioner, etc.) that you don't have a spleen.
- Consider getting a medical alert ID bracelet that says you don't have a spleen.

### Other Home Care

- Shower or bathe as directed by your doctor.
- Wash your incision site with soap and water and pat dry.
- Check your incision every day for redness, drainage, swelling, or separation of the skin.
- Take your medications exactly as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Don't take any over-the-counter medication unless your doctor tells you to do so.
- Check your temperature each day for 1 week after your surgery.
- Return to your regular diet as tolerated. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.

### When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- Fever above (38°C) or chills
- Any unusual bleeding
- Increased pain, warmth, redness, or drainage in or around your incision
- Incision that opens up or pulls apart

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