

## POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR RECTAL/PELVIC FLOOR SURGERY

### Some points to consider:

- It is most important to avoid straining, constipation or sitting on the toilet for long periods.
- Because of normal post-operative swelling, inaccurate nerve messages of fullness in the rectum are often experienced so it is difficult to determine if the rectum is full or if it is just a sensation of fullness.
- Urgency is often experienced due to the diminished storage area in the rectum following surgery (either due to post-operative swelling, or tissue excision).
- Bowel control may take several weeks or even months before returning to normal or a significant improvement occurs. In some cases an improvement in continence rather than full control is a realistic outcome.
- At times it may feel as if bowel motions get 'stuck' in the rectum or that there is not enough muscle tone to evacuate the stool. Elevation of the feet onto tin cans or a piece of wood while sitting on the toilet, or using a rocking motion often helps overcome this.
- Pelvic floor exercises are often beneficial in helping to achieve full continence.
- All these conditions will improve as the swelling subsides and the healing process progresses.
- Eat a balanced diet including fresh fruit and vegetables and at least one litre water per day.
- Take the prescribed laxatives as directed (normally Metamucil or lactulose). The dosage may need to be adjusted after a period of time.

### Hygiene:

- It is important to keep the peri-anal area clean and dry.
- Avoid using dry toilet paper – instead use a warm flannel or moist, soft tissue to keep the area clean. Don't rub the area.
- Saline baths (1/2 cup salt per bath) following each bowel movement (and more often if possible) are not only essential for hygiene but also very soothing.
- For use after showering make up a solution of 1 pint of water, 1 tablespoon salt. Dissolve salt in a little hot water first and then add the remainder of water. This can be kept in a plastic container, e.g. fizzy drink bottle, and used after showering. Warm the solution under a tap or microwave if desired.
- A hairdryer on cool setting may assist in drying the area after cleaning.
- If the anal area becomes sore and excoriated, Zinc & Castor Oil Cream, applied after cleansing or bathing protects the skin. This is obtainable from a pharmacy or the Infant department at the supermarket.

If you have any concerns or questions about your post-operative recovery period, please phone the Practice Nurse the Rooms on 961-6666.

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