

# After Intrathecal Baclofen (ITB) Pump Surgery

## Information for patients going home

Read this resource to learn:

- Caring for my incisions (cuts) ..... page 3
- Coping with pain ..... page 5
- Getting back to my usual activities ..... page 6
- Signs and symptoms of infection ..... page 6
- Programming the pump ..... page 7
- In case of emergency: ..... page 8

<p><b>Pump surgery date:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Neurosurgeon:</b> _____</p>
--



**You have had a general anesthetic.**

**Do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.**

Call your neurosurgeon, family doctor, or go to the nearest Emergency Department if:

- You notice signs of infection after your surgery
- The pain gets worse
- Your headache:
  - does not go away for 7 days
  - does not go away when you lie down
  - comes with a fever and stiff neck
- You have not had a bowel movement 3 days after surgery

## Going home

Before you leave the hospital, make sure you get these items from the nurse to keep for your own records:

1. A Blue "Registration Form": Shows who your pump surgeon is and when the pump was put in.
2. A wallet-sized "registration card": Shows your pump information and doctor's information. Keep the card in your wallet to prove that you have a medical implant.
3. Patient Information book from Medtronic: This is a handbook to help you understand your pump better.

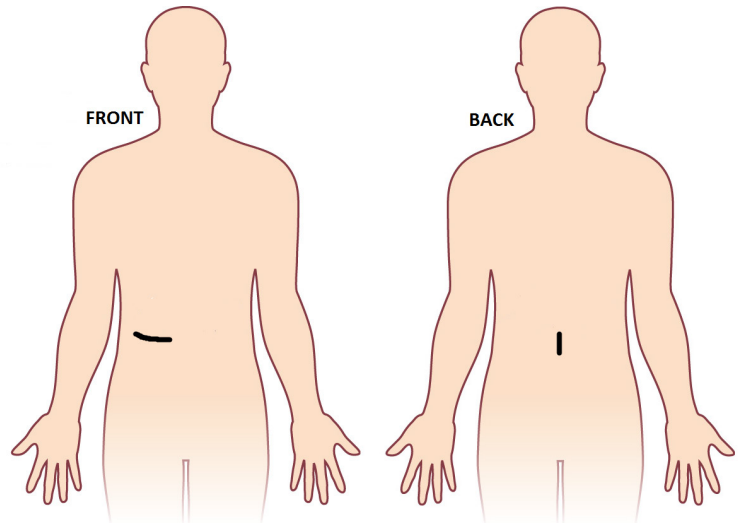


## Caring for my incisions (cuts)

After your surgery, you will have 2 cuts: one on your stomach and one on your lower back.

Both cuts will be covered with a dressing after surgery. You can remove both dressings 3 days after your surgery on: \_\_\_\_\_.

After the dressing is removed, you do not need to cover the staples or stitches with a dressing.



If there is bloody fluid on the dressing when you remove it, you can replace it with sterile gauze. You can buy sterile gauze from your pharmacy. Some people like to keep the cuts covered with sterile gauze until the stitches or staples come out. It is ok to do this.

**Keep your cuts dry.** Do not put creams, lotions or ointments on the areas.



## Showering and bathing

Before you take your first shower you can wash with a sponge.

You can take a shower **4 days after** your surgery on:\_\_\_\_\_.

When you shower:

- Allow soapy water to run over the cuts. Do not scrub the cuts.
- Use a towel to gently pat the cut dry.

For the first 8 to 10 weeks after your surgery, do not soak your cuts in water. For example: do not take a bath or go swimming.

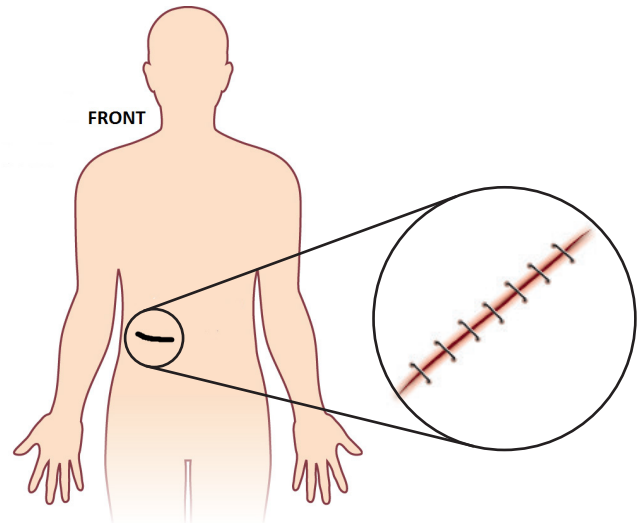
## Staples and stitches

The staples or stitches can be removed 14 days after your surgery on:

---

To remove the staples or stitches:

- See the Intrathecal Baclofen nurse coordinator to remove the staples for you. Call 416-597-3422 extension 5764.
- Or make an appointment with your family doctor and take the staple remover with you. We will give a staple remover when you leave the hospital.

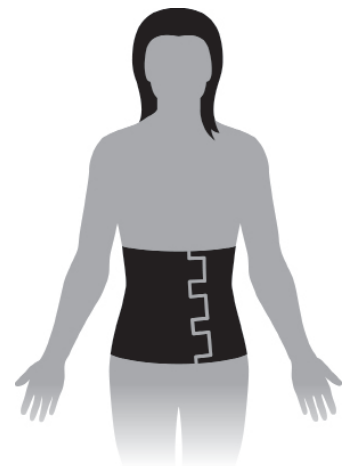


## Wearing my abdominal binder

We will give you an abdominal binder to wear over the pump, under your clothing. It will cover your stomach.

The abdominal binder should be loose enough to just fit your finger under it. It will slightly squeeze your stomach to lower the chance of fluid around the pump.

Wear the abdominal binder for 6 weeks after your surgery. You can take it off for showers or baths.



## Taking my medicine

Keep taking all your other medicine as before, unless your health care team tells you not to.

Talk to a member of the health care team before taking any blood thinners that you were taking before your surgery (For example: Coumadin, Aspirin, Plavix).

## Coping with pain

Having pain after your surgery is normal. You may have pain around the cuts. This should slowly get better.

We may give you a prescription for pain medicine when you leave the hospital. Take pain medicine when you need it. Always follow the instructions on the bottle.

You may also be told to take Tylenol for pain. **Do not take aspirin for pain.**



**If the pain gets very bad, call your neurosurgeon, your family doctor or go to the nearest Emergency Department.**



## Coping with headaches

You may have a spinal or low pressure headache after surgery. This type of headache is worse when you sit or stand but gets better when you lie down.

These headaches are caused by spinal fluid that can leak during surgery and they usually go away after a few days.

To cope with your headache:

- Take pain medication when you need it
- Rest
- Drink lots of fluids – about 6 to 8 cups per day



**Call your neurosurgeon if your headache:**

- **does not go away after 7 days**
- **does not go away when you lie down**
- **comes with fever and stiff neck**



## Getting back to my usual activities

You may go back to your usual activities (like dressing, transferring or sitting in a wheelchair).

- Do not do activities that cause you to do a lot of bending or twisting at the waist until your cuts are completely healed. Heavy lifting may bother your cuts.
- Do not do activities that cause you to move too much for 3 weeks.
- After 3 weeks you can start to do more activities as long as they don't cause you any pain.
- Please talk with your neurosurgeon about activities, like travelling or returning to work.



## Meals and constipation

You may go back to eating your normal meals.

Constipation can be a problem after surgery. Constipation means you are not able to have a bowel movement. Drink plenty of fluids to avoid constipation.



**If you have not had a bowel movement within 3 days after surgery, call your family doctor.**

## Signs and symptoms of infection

Look at your cut for signs of infection, including:

- More redness or swelling around your cut
- Leaking from your cut (for example yellow or green pus)
- More pain than usual around your cut
- Fever (a temperature over 38 °C or 101 °F)



**If you notice any of these signs and symptoms, call your neurosurgeon, nurse coordinator, or go to nearest Emergency Department.**

## Programming the pump

Your pump was turned on with a low starting dose of ITB while you were in surgery. You may or may not notice a benefit from the ITB at this time. More appointments are needed after you go home to find the best ITB dose for you.

Doctor: Dr. Anthony Burns

Nurse coordinator: Hannah Hollett, RN

Phone number: 416 597 3422 extension 5764

Clinic: Intrathecal Baclofen Clinic

Location: Toronto Rehab – Lyndhurst Centre, Outpatient Clinic

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_



## Follow-up visit with my neurosurgeon

You must have a follow-up appointment with your neurosurgeon around 6 to 8 weeks after your surgery. Please call your surgeon's office to make an appointment if one was not already made for you.

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Admin Assistant: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Clinic: Neurosurgery Department

Location: Toronto Western Hospital – West Wing, 4th floor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_



## For more information

- Please read your Medtronic patient information booklet.
- Please carry your Medtronic patient registration card and emergency contact information card at all times in your wallet or purse.

If you need more information or have other questions you can also contact:

Medtronic Patient Services: 1 888 660 4616



### **In case of emergency:**

If you have a medical emergency after surgery, please call your neurosurgeon.

Or, go to the Toronto Western Hospital Emergency Department or the nearest Emergency Department.



### **Have feedback about this document?**

Please fill out our survey. Use this link: [surveymonkey.com/r/uhn-pe](https://surveymonkey.com/r/uhn-pe)

Visit [www.uhnpatienteducation.ca](http://www.uhnpatienteducation.ca) for more health information. Contact [pfep@uhn.ca](mailto:pfep@uhn.ca) to request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats.

© 2023 University Health Network. All rights reserved. Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.