Going home after your prostate surgery

This brochure has information to help you when you are ready to go home after your prostate surgery.
Taking care of yourself at home after prostate surgery

How to care for your incision

- You can shower while the clips are in place.
- Use a pure, mild soap without perfumes or chemicals. Then pat the area around the incision with a dry towel.
- Do not put any creams, lotions or powder on your incision for at least 6 weeks.

Call the 6A nursing unit if you notice:

- redness or swelling around the incision more than before
- tenderness around the incision more than before
- leaking from the incision
- your incision or wound starts to separate

How to care for your foley catheter

- You can shower with the foley catheter in place.
- Use a mild soap to clean off any discharge (pus).
- Pat the area dry with a dry towel.
- Put polysporin where the catheter enters the penis. Polysporin helps to form a barrier to keep bacteria from going up the catheter into the bladder.
How often should I clean the foley catheter area?

Clean the catheter area 2 to 3 times a day and as needed.

You can use a baby wet wipe to clean the area instead of soap and water, if it’s easier. (You can buy baby wipes at any drug store or supermarket.)

How to change your leg bag

During the day:
It's important to wear the leg bag.
This is a smaller bag that can be worn under pants.

During the night:
It's important to wear the larger bag.
This larger bag makes urine flows away from the bladder.
It can be left on the floor next to your bed.

When you are changing from one bag to another, clean the bag that is not being used.

- Use a few drops of liquid soap and warm water to clean the bag.
- You can also use white vinegar and then let it drip dry.
What you need to know about your catheter

- The catheter should be secure. Tape it very well to the upper part of your thigh to reduce pulling. Pulling on the catheter may cause some bleeding.
- Call your doctor if the catheter comes out.
- Your urine should be clear. Not drinking enough fluid will make your urine darker.
- The colour of your urine may change from clear amber to dark burgundy. This is normal. There are usually old clots at the bottom of the bladder and when you move around these clots stir and make your urine change colour.
- Spasms may irritate and cause some bleeding. Call your doctor if the bleeding does not decrease even when you are drinking fluids and resting.
- **Do NOT** do Kegel exercises while the catheter is in place. The exercises will give you spasms and cause bleeding.
- If your urine becomes bright red, drink more fluids and rest for short periods. Urine may become more red if you are straining for a bowel movement.
- It is normal to have urine leak around the catheter. This is caused by bladder spasms. This may also happen when you are having a bowel movement.
- It is normal to pass old clots from around the catheter. These are usually too large to fit through the catheter.
- **STOP** taking any bladder spasm medication such as Ditropan or O&B suppositories 24 hours before your catheter comes out.

Call the 6A nursing unit if:

- you are having chills and a fever (38 °C or higher)
- the bleeding (bright red blood) does not decrease when you drink more fluid and rest
What to do about swelling around the scrotum and penis

It is normal for your penis and scrotum to be swollen for a few weeks after surgery.

To help bring down the swelling:

- wear brief underwear (not boxers) to give you more support
- apply ice packs to the scrotum area
- elevate the scrotum with a towel

Going back to your normal activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things NOT to do</th>
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Do NOT use suppositories or fleet enema for 6 weeks after surgery. This may damage the area where we did the surgery.

Listen to your body! For the first few weeks after surgery:

- Avoid strenuous exercise such as shoveling snow or mowing the lawn.
- Avoid heavy lifting. Lift nothing over 5 kilos or 10 lbs (the size of a bag of flour).
- Avoid doing Yoga and Ti Chi because they use your core abdominal muscles, which should not be strained for 6 weeks.
- Avoid driving a car for few weeks after surgery.
- Avoid long car drives. If you're travelling, make frequent stops to walk and stretch your legs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things you can do</th>
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</table>

- Take slow walks or use a treadmill. Put the treadmill on low incline and slow speed.
- Do your regular exercise again 6 weeks after surgery. It may take time to build up your strength, and you may get tired easily. Listen to your body and rest as needed.
A few weeks after your surgery

For a few weeks after surgery, you may feel discomfort near your rectum or perineum. The perineum is the skin between the genitals and the anus. This is part of your healing and will get better over time. Many men may find it uncomfortable to sit for a long time.

You may start to masturbate after the catheter comes out. Most men find that when they are sexually aroused, they will have an orgasm even though they don't have an erection. Your doctor can give you medication for erections. You can usually start them 7 weeks after your surgery or after your follow-up appointment.

Orgasms will be dry. Some men may leak urine during orgasm, but this usually goes away over time. Kegel exercises may help.

Medications are available to strengthen erections. Talk to your surgeon during your follow up visit about what is right for you.

If you are sexually active, we will give you an appointment at the Prostate Cancer Rehabilitation Clinic usually at 3 or 4 months after surgery.

What to eat

✓ You can eat what you normally do once you are home. A large meal may not settle well with your stomach. Try eating smaller meals more often.

✓ Although your body needs some fat to work properly, there is a link between eating more dietary fat and a higher chance of developing prostate cancer. It may be hard to change what you eat at first, but once you know which foods to eat less or more of, eating healthy can get easier.
  • Eat a Healthy Prostate Diet (the recommendations on pages 7 and 8 are just some suggestions)
  • Eat a low fat diet such as the Healthy Heart Diet
  • Avoid or eat less fast food, fried foods, gravy and creams.
  • Don’t eat too much cheese, chocolate and nuts.
What if I'm constipated?

It’s normal to be constipated after abdominal surgery.

If you are constipated, drink more fluids and eat more bran and fibre such as fruits and vegetables in the first few weeks after surgery.

If you are taking the supplements listed below, do not take more than the recommended dose. Check the label.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Soy (Tofu, Soymilk, Tempeh, Soy powder)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>Plant protein that's low in fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How much?</strong></td>
<td>40 grams every day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Getting enough protein is very important, but animal protein is high in fat. Of all plant proteins, soy has full range of essential amino acids and "cancer fighting" isoflavones.

If you don’t like soy, or it’s a difficult change to make, you can try soy supplements. Adding soy to your diet may cause you to gain weight if you add it to your regular eating habits.

Talk to your doctor or dietitian if you are on a protein restricted diet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Selenium</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>An antioxidant usually found in soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How much?</strong></td>
<td>200 ug every day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is almost impossible to get from food, so you can buy a supplement from a pharmacy or health food store.

Research suggests that in countries with low selenium levels such as Canada and United States, cancer rates are higher. This includes prostate cancer.

Do NOT take more than the recommended dose. High doses of selenium may cause other health problems.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Lycopenes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>An antioxidant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How much?</strong></td>
<td>30 mg</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Lycopenes is found in tomatoes, papaya, and watermelon. Studies suggest men who eat more than 10 servings a week of cooked tomatoes have a one-third (1/3) reduction in prostate cancer. When it comes to lycopenes, cooked food is better than raw.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Vitamin D</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>An antioxidant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How much?</strong></td>
<td>400 IU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For men and women over 50 years old, Health Canada recommends taking a Vitamin D supplement every day that has 400 IU. Vitamin D is found in sunlight and in fish such as Atlantic herring, sockeye salmon, Greenland halibut, catfish, tuna, Atlantic cod and Pacific sardines.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Green tea</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>A powerful antioxidant that may help to slow down tumor growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How much?</strong></td>
<td>5 to 10 cups a day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Green Tea is a favourite in many Asian countries where men have lower rates of prostate cancer. Green tea may also be taken in pill form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Zinc</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>A mineral that has many helpful qualities. It helps our body to repair wounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How much?</strong></td>
<td>less than 10 mg a day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The amount to take every day is very low. So, you can easily get the right amount by eating a well balanced diet. Zinc is found in:

- meat, like poultry and liver
- eggs
- seafood, especially oysters and crab
- tofu, black-eyed peas and wheatgerm
Want more information?

Information in this brochure comes from the guide “Challenging Prostate Cancer: Nutrition, Exercise and You” by John Trachtenberg, Neil Fleshner, Kristen Currie, Daniel SantaMina, Andrew Matthew, Carol Lancaster RN, Barbie Casselman, Paul Ritvo and Jane Irvine.

This guide, produced by the Prostate Centre at the Princess Margaret, has information on healthy eating and physical activity based on the latest research in the prostate cancer field.

Download a PDF file of this guide by visiting:

The Prostate Centre at the Princess Margaret
Website: www.prostatecentre.ca
- Select “Survivorship and Wellness”
- Then select “Nutrition Program” to download your PDF copy