



*Abdominal Core Health Rehabilitation*

# **Abdominal Core Surgery Rehabilitation Protocol In-Hospital Guide for Patients and Physical Therapists<sup>SM</sup>**

Version Date: 10-14-2020

**DISCLAIMER:** Your use of this Guide acknowledges that you understand the following: Surgery patients should check with their surgeon to see if they are ready to start the rehabilitation program outlined in this Guide. Others should consult with their physician before starting the exercise programs outlined in this Guide. Check with your healthcare provider if you experience unexpected pain when using this Guide.

**Reminders:**

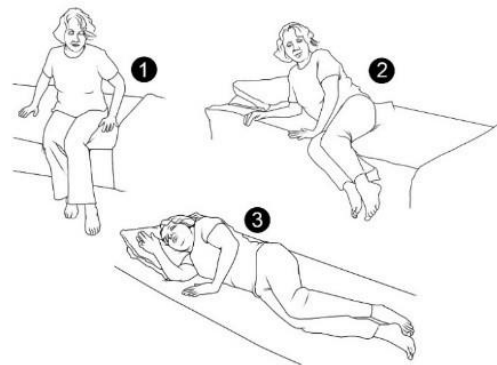
- Bring your abdominal binder with you on the day of surgery.
- Breathe with movement. Exhale with exertion.
- Sit up in a chair for all meals.
- Get up to walk 3 times per day for 5 minutes. Focus on breathing. Walk like you're walking alongside a toddler, taking slow, steady steps.
- Wear your abdominal binder down over your hips. It may ride up towards your chest while laying down, but it is important to adjust it to the correct place.

**After surgery:**

- Do not hold your breath when you move.
- Use belly breathing to reduce pressure on your abdomen. As you inhale, let your belly fill with air. When you breathe out, let your belly relax, bringing your belly button in towards your spine.
- It is normal to have pain after surgery. Movement and exercises will help ease the pain and encourage healing.
- Do not lift more than 5 pounds the first 3 days after surgery. Then limit lifting to no more than 10 pounds for 2 weeks, or as directed by care team.

**Getting to bed:**

Sit on side of the bed. Lower yourself to lie down on one side by raising legs and lowering head at the same time. Use arms to assist moving. Do not twist. Bend both knees to roll onto back if desired. To sit up, reverse this movement.



**Sit in a chair for meals and walk daily:**

- Sit up in a chair for all meals. Staff will help you get up the first time after surgery.
- Walk the first day after surgery. Call for help to prevent falling. Try to walk for 5 minutes 3 to 6 times each day in the hospital. Focus on breathing and take slow, steady steps.
- After you leave the hospital, keep walking. Increase the time or distance you walk a bit more each day, with a goal of walking 30 minutes without pain or feeling tired by 1 month after your surgery.

## Sleeping

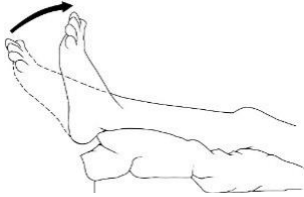
- Place a pillow under your knees if sleeping on back.
- Place a pillow between your knees if sleeping on side.



## Exercises

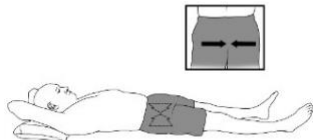
Do these exercises to help improve your circulation and promote healing. Exercising will also help ease sore muscles and gain strength. If you have any questions about the exercises, ask your nurse or physical therapist for help.

- Do these exercises 2 or 3 times daily.
- Repeat each exercise 10 times per set and do 3 sets each time.
- Remember to breathe. Holding your breath places pressure on your abdomen.



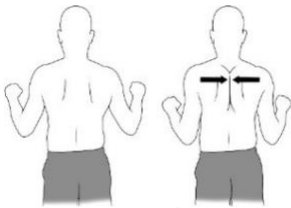
### Ankle Pumps

These can be done while lying on your back or seated in a chair. Move your foot up and down as if pushing down or letting up on a gas pedal. Repeat with other foot.



### Glute Squeezes

These can be done while lying on your back. Squeeze your buttocks together. Hold for 5 seconds and release.



### Shoulder Blade Squeezes

Bend your arms at your elbows and push back to bring your shoulder blades together at your back. Avoid lifting your shoulders up.



### Seated Knee Extension

Sit with your back supported in a chair. Lift your foot and straighten your knee. Lower your foot back down slowly to the floor. Repeat with other leg.



### Shoulder Rolls

Slowly roll your shoulders backwards in a circle. Then roll them forwards in a circle.

## **Abdominal Core Surgery Rehabilitation Protocol Development Team**

### **Vanderbilt University Medical Center**

Jennifer Emery PT, DPT, MOT; Tiffany Priest PT, DPT, WCS; Julie Richard PT, CSCS;  
Shannon Bell MSN, ACNP-BC; Richard Pierce MD, PhD

### **The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center**

Benjamin Poulouse MD, MPH; Savannah Renshaw BS; Courtney Collins MD, MS; Laura Ward PT, DPT, MTC; Stephanie Bobinger PT, DPT, WCS; Maggie Abrams PT, DPT, CYT, WCS; ReNea Owens PT, Michelle Graf PT; Kenneth Kozlosky MS, CCC-SLP; Andrew Morris PT, DPT; Emily George BS

### **Furman University**

Phil Gregory PT, DPT, OCS, CSCS

### **Prisma Health**

Jeremy Warren MD, FACS

### **The Cleveland Clinic**

Michael Rosen, MD; Ajita Prabhu, MD; David Krpata, MD; Clayton Petro, MD