

Surgical Services of Athens

201 N. Malone St
Athens, AL 35611
(256) 216-6500

Open Laparotomy (Abdominal) Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

- A post-operative visit has been arranged as noted in your paperwork. You may call the office during business hours to verify your post-operative visit date and time if needed. Office hours are 8am-12pm and 2pm-5pm Monday through Thursday and 8am-12pm on Friday.
- Your incisions will typically be closed with staples. If present, there will either be a gauze dressing over the staples, or a PICO Vac battery powered dressing. If you have a standard dressing, it may be removed 24-48 hours after your surgery, unless otherwise instructed. It may be replaced with a similar gauze or dry dressing as needed for protection of the underlying staples.
- If you have a PICO vac battery powered dressing, do not remove the dressing from the skin. It will be easily removed in the office approximately one week after the initial placement.
- If you have a drain in place, please strip the drain tubing as instructed twice daily, and empty the bulb and record the output from the drain. Please bring your output log to the post-op office visit. It is normal to leak some watery fluid around the drain site, especially the first few days after surgery. We recommend that you take a dose of pain medication about 1 hour prior to the office visit if you anticipate drain removal during the visit.
- Prescription pain medication may cause nausea and will often cause constipation. You may take an over-the-counter laxative as needed. If you have had bowel surgery, you may see a small amount of old blood or dark material in the stool after surgery.
- Some redness around the incision is expected and does not require antibiotics; however, if the redness significantly expands in size or if a surgical site becomes increasingly tender or drains a thick or foul-smelling material, please call for further instruction.
- Notify us for fever over 101, or go to the nearest ER immediately for significant shortness of breath.
- The on-call physician will not be able to provide narcotic pain medication. By law, narcotic pain medication cannot be called in to a pharmacy. Do not take Tylenol (acetaminophen) within 4 hours of taking a narcotic pain medication.
- Driving after surgery is not recommended until prescription pain medication is no longer needed. You may typically drive if narcotic pain medication has not been taken within 24 hours.
- You may shower after being discharged from the hospital, unless otherwise instructed. If a drain is in place, you should keep the drain insertion site dry. Pat the incision dry after the shower. You should avoid bathing in a bathtub or swimming until cleared by your surgeon. If you have a PICO Vac, the dressing is water-resistant, but the battery pack should remain dry. Simply press the on/off button on the battery back, and gently unscrew the battery pack tubing as instructed. After showering, pat the dressing dry, screw the battery pack tubing into place, and press the on/off button.
- We recommend that you avoid strenuous activity until your follow-up visit, but regular walking is encouraged.
- An on-call physician is available at all times for emergencies; however, we ask that you call during business hours for non-emergent and routine questions.