

Care After Surgery

It is important for you and your doctor to discuss the appropriate care needed after your surgery. You can print out this postprocedure care guide and have your doctor use it to give you specific instructions.

After anal or rectovaginal fistula repair, some of your doctor's recommendations may include:

- Maintain a liquid diet for 2 days after the procedure (e.g., soup, pudding, etc.).
- Begin eating a high-fiber diet after 2 days.
- Use stool softeners for 2 weeks.
- Use the bathroom at least once a day.
- Take over-the-counter pain medicine as needed.
- Do not use topical steroids, such as over-the-counter hemorrhoidal creams.
- Do not lift anything over 10 pounds for 2 weeks (6 weeks for rectovaginal fistula).
- Avoid any exercise more strenuous than a gentle walk for 2 weeks (6 weeks for rectovaginal fistula).
- Abstain from sexual intercourse and other forms of vaginal/rectal insertion (e.g., tampons) for at least 2 weeks if you had an anal fistula repair and for 6 weeks with rectovaginal fistula repair.
- Shower standing up and bathe the area with water to soothe and keep it clean.
- Expect some drainage for 2-4 weeks. Drainage can continue for up to 12 weeks after the procedure.