



## **Are there potential problems that could occur after surgery?**

There are some common problems that may occur after surgery:

- Nausea is common after surgery. Your diet will be changed slowly to reduce nausea, but it is important to let your nurse and/or surgeon know if you begin to feel nauseous so that your diet is not changed too quickly.
- Sometimes people have difficulty urinating after surgery from the anesthesia. It is important to let your nurse and/or surgeon know if you are having difficulty with urination, or if you have the feeling of a full bladder and you are unable to empty it.
- Some people have problems with constipation after surgery from the lack of movement, anesthesia, and pain medications. Abdominal surgery may also cause constipation. The nurses will ask you about your bowel activity. Let your nurse and/or surgeon know if you are having difficulty moving your bowels. Your surgeon can order medicine to help with this.

**Other problems that may occur after surgery, and are less common, include infection at your surgical site or incision, and bleeding. It is important to recognize the symptoms of infection and/or bleeding, and to report them immediately:**

### **What are the signs of infection?**

- A fever or temperature of 100° F or more
- There is increasing or unusual pain at the surgical site

- The skin around the incision is warm or hot to touch, and may be tender
- The incision and surrounding skin is very red in color
- There is drainage, usually with an odor, at the incision
- You have a general feeling of weakness or “just not feeling well”

### **What are the signs or symptoms of bleeding?**

- Bright red blood from the incision or on the dressing if there is one covering the incision
- Lightheadedness, or dizziness
- Rapid heart/pulse rate
- Decrease or drop in blood pressure

Even after discharge from the hospital, it is important to let your surgeon know if you are experiencing any of these problems after surgery.

**Remember to call your surgeon once you leave the hospital to make your follow-up post-operative appointment.**

*Source:*

Smeltzer, S., & Bare, B.(2004). *Burnner & Suddarth's Textbook of Medical-Surgical Nursing*. New York, NY:Lippincott Williams &Wilkins.

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