

Greenwich Hospital

What is a Small Bowel Resection?

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is a small bowel resection?

A small bowel resection is surgery to remove a diseased portion of the small bowel or intestine. Some reasons to perform a small bowel resection include:

- Intestinal blockage or obstruction
- Injury to the small bowel
- Bleeding and/or ulcers due to inflammation from certain conditions such as Crohn's disease and ileitis
- Growths such as cancer, precancerous polyps, or benign tumors

What should I expect prior to the surgery?

- ✓ Your doctor may order blood work prior to the procedure.
- ✓ Depending upon your age and medical history, the doctor may also order a chest x-ray and/or electrocardiogram of your heart.
- ✓ You should review your list of medications (prescription and over-the-counter) and herbals with your surgeon because many medications and herbals can affect normal blood clotting after surgery.
- ✓ Your doctor may recommend antibiotics prior to surgery if you have had a small bowel infection.
- ✓ Depending upon your doctor's orders, you may need to do a bowel prep and follow a clear liquid diet prior to the day of surgery to clean the small bowel out.

How is a small bowel resection performed?

- You will be given anesthesia prior to the beginning of the procedure.
- You may have a catheter placed in your urinary bladder to help keep your bladder empty during the procedure.
- A small incision, or cut, is made into the abdomen.
- The small bowel is clamped above and below the diseased section.
- The diseased section is then cut free and removed.
- Depending upon your specific condition, your doctor will either:
 - Sew the free ends of the small bowel together, or
 - Create an ileostomy or opening in the abdominal wall (called a stoma) through which the end of the small bowel will drain. This allows the bowel contents to empty into a sealed pouch system adhered to the abdomen.
 - An ileostomy may be either permanent, or temporary. If the ileostomy is temporary, follow-up surgery will be scheduled to re-attach the ends of the small bowel and close the stoma.

- The abdomen is closed with stitches or staples and a sterile dressing is placed over the surgical area.

What should I expect after the surgery?

- You will have medications ordered for pain. Let your nurse know if you are uncomfortable or in pain.
- You will be assisted out of bed the night of surgery to promote healing and to prevent complications from bed rest, such as blood clots in your legs, skin breakdown, lung problems, and difficulty emptying your bladder. *It is important to get out of bed when directed by your health care team..*
- If you have a urinary catheter in place, this will be removed as soon as possible.
- You may have a tube in your nose that goes down into your stomach and is attached to wall suction. This is called a naso-gastric tube and it helps to empty stomach juices to keep your small bowel empty. This will be removed prior to eating.
- Initially after surgery, you will not be allowed anything to eat or drink. Your doctor may allow you to suck on ice chips.
- Your diet will be slowly advanced from a clear liquid diet to a diet as tolerated. It is important to report to your nurse any feelings of nausea or vomiting as your diet is advanced.
- Let your nurse know when you have a bowel movement after surgery. This is important information that indicates your small bowel is functioning correctly.
- Your doctor will give you specific orders regarding when you may shower, take a tub bath, and resume normal activities, such as exercise and work.
- It is important to keep your post-operative appointment with your doctor to have your abdomen checked.

What should I report to my doctor?

As with most surgeries, there are certain symptoms that should be reported to your doctor if you experience them:

- Bleeding or drainage at your surgical site
- Blood in bowel movements
- Fever (temp greater than 101)
- Increased pain or abdominal cramping
- Constipation

Sources: AllRefer.com Health @ <http://health.allrefer.com> Retrieved April 2006.
National Library of Medicine/MedlinePlus @ www.nlm.nih.gov Retrieved April 2006.

*For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org
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