

# Right or Left Hemicolectomy

## Information for patients and families

Read this booklet to learn:

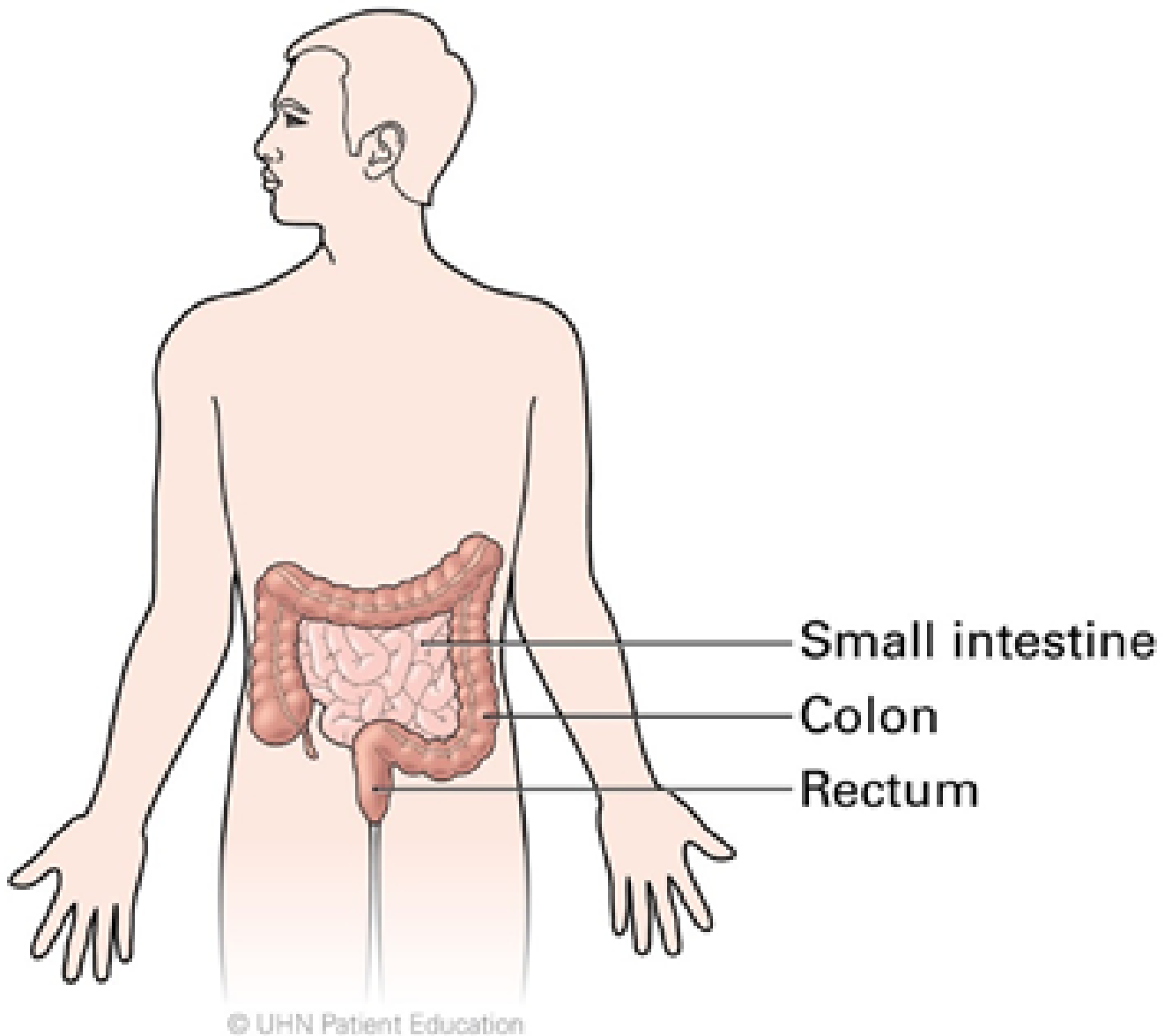
- what a right or left hemicolectomy is
- how to prepare
- how to take part in your care in hospital and at home
- what problems to look out for
- who to call if you have any questions



## What is a right or left hemicolectomy?

A right or left hemicolectomy is surgery that removes the right or left side of your colon.

Most patients can go home about 4 to 7 days after surgery.



## How can I prepare for surgery?

Make sure your home is ready for you (for example, stocked with groceries, clean and tidy so you can rest when you return home).

- Buy easy to prepare foods such as soups or pre-made light meals, so you don't have to cook when you go home.
- Eat healthy foods before your surgery, including lots of protein.
- Plan to have a friend or family member drive you home from the hospital.
- Bring your health card (OHIP) with you to the hospital.
- Only bring what you need with you to the hospital. Don't overpack. You can find more information about this in Part C of your [My Surgery Guide](#).
- Bring your [My Surgery Guide](#) with you to the hospital.

## How can I take part in my care after surgery?

Your health care team will help you as you recover after surgery. This chart lets you know what you can expect and how you can take part in your care. This is just a guide. Everyone recovers at their own pace.

Day in hospital	Activities	Food and drink
Day of surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit up in bed, at side of bed or in a chair for 10 to 20 minutes</li> <li>• Deep breathing and coughing exercises</li> <li>• Leg exercises</li> </ul> <p>Your <a href="#">My Surgery Guide</a> has more information about exercises and moving around.</p>	Clear fluids
Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk 1 to 2 laps around unit</li> <li>• Sit up in bed, at side of bed or in a chair for 1 to 4 hours throughout day</li> <li>• Deep breathing and coughing exercises</li> <li>• Leg exercises</li> </ul>	Clear fluids
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk 2 to 3 laps around unit</li> <li>• Sit up for 2 to 4 hours throughout day</li> <li>• Deep breathing and coughing exercises</li> <li>• Leg exercises</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> We switch your pain medicine to pills as your pain improves.</p>	Move from clear fluids to soups and milk products with meals.

Day in hospital	Activities	Food and drink
Days 3 to 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk 3 to 4 laps around unit</li> <li>• Sit up for 3 to 6 hours</li> <li>• Deep breathing and coughing exercises</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Your health care team will arrange home care for you if you need it.</p>	If soups and milk products are OK, move to a regular diet.
Days 4 to 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you continue to move around safely</li> <li>• Ask friends and family to prepare for your return home</li> </ul>	Regular foods

**When can I go home?**

- When you are passing gas. You may go home before you have your first bowel movement after surgery.
- When your pain medicine pills are able to control your pain

Homecare (LHIN Home and Community) and other help **may** be set up to help you as you continue to heal and recover at home.

Please ask to see our social worker if you have any questions.



## How do I care for myself when I get home?

Call the nurse navigator at 416 262 1992 if you have any questions or concerns.



## Food and drink

At first, you may not feel like eating. It may be work to sit and eat a small meal.

Follow these instructions as you recover:

- Eat smaller meals more often until your appetite returns. Eat foods like:
  - soups
  - cooked vegetables
  - fruits
  - a sandwich
  - soft cheese and yogurt
  - soft pasta and soft rice
  - puddings and shakes
  - lean meats, chicken and fish
- Eat foods you enjoy and that are easy for you to digest.
- Drink at least 6 cups of fluids every day (1 cup is equal to 250 millilitres).



## Activity

Try to walk around the house, but take rest breaks throughout the day. When the weather is good, take short 10 to 15 minute walks outside.

No lifting, pushing or pulling anything more than 10 to 15 pounds (for example, a cat or small dog, or a sack of potatoes).



## Showering or bathing

You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Use a wash cloth with water on the incision (cut). Don't put soap directly on your incision. Gently pat your incision until it is dry.

You may have a bath once your wound is healed. This usually takes 2 to 3 weeks. There should not be any openings, scabs or draining from your incision by the time you have a bath.



## Pain

You may still have some pain around your incision area. Follow the instructions for taking your pain medicine to control your pain. This will help you move around.

## Bowel movements

You will continue to pass gas as you recover at home. Your bowel movements may be a bit loose, which is normal. Some dark blood is normal with your first few bowel movements.

Pain medicines can make your stool hard or you may have trouble going to the bathroom. Try to prevent this by making sure you drink fluids during the day.

Take the medicines your doctor prescribed you to help move your bowels. If you didn't get a prescription, you can talk to the pharmacist at the drug store.

After surgery, your bowel movements may not be regular.

Follow these instructions if you have constipation or diarrhea:

### **Constipation (hard stool or no stool)**

Constipation is common after surgery. It can be caused by your pain medicine, less exercise (walking) and changes in your diet.

To reduce the risk of constipation:

- If you spoke with a dietitian, please follow what they told you to eat and drink.
- Drink 6 to 8 cups of fluids each day. One cup is equal to 250 millilitres. This can include water, juice, tea, broth and Jell-O.
- Increase the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat. Try to have 5 to 10 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. One serving is 1 medium fruit or vegetable.
- Eat more fibre, such as bran and whole grains.
- You may get a prescription for a medicine called Colace. This medicine will help make your stool soft.
- If your bowels have not moved in 3 to 4 days, you may need to take a mild laxative such as Senekot. You can buy it over the counter at your local drug store. Speak to the pharmacist at the drug store if you have questions about drugs for your bowels.
- Speak to your family doctor or surgeon if you continue to have problems with constipation.



## **Diarrhea**

You may get diarrhea (watery poo) after your surgery. It happens when there is an increase of water in your stool. You may need to get to the bathroom quickly and you may have pain or soreness around your anal area.

### **To reduce the effects of diarrhea, follow the instructions below until the diarrhea stops:**

- Change how much fibre you eat. Eat less fresh fruit and vegetables, bran, nuts, and seeds.
- Do not drink milk and milk products, caffeine and alcohol.
- Avoid eating greasy, spicy, or foods with lots of sugar.
- Drink 8 to 10 cups of fluids each day. This includes sport drinks such as Gatorade. We recommend sports drinks because they contain electrolytes. Electrolytes help keep a balance of fluid in your body.
- Eat many small meals of cooked fruits and vegetables, rice, noodles, lean meats, fish, chicken, bananas, applesauce, saltine crackers, and toast.
- Talk to your pharmacist about a barrier cream you can use if your perineum (area around your anus) is red and sore.

Speak to your family doctor or surgeon if you continue to have problems with diarrhea.



## **Call the nurse navigator at 416 262 1992 if you:**

- Have a fever higher than 38.5 °C or 101 °F
- Are vomiting or feel bloated and sick to your stomach all the time
- Have redness, swelling, odour, pus or increasing pain at or around your incision (cut)
- Pass bright red blood from your rectum
- Have pain or trouble going pee
- Have stomach pain that pain medicine doesn't help

Call the nurse navigator if you have any other concerns or go to your family doctor or local emergency department.

## **Who can I call if I have any questions?**

You can call the nurse navigator between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, 7 days a week.

### **My follow-up appointment:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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