

An anterior resection is a major colorectal surgery in which a part or entirety of the rectum is removed. This procedure is most commonly completed laparoscopically (keyhole). Once the segment of the bowel is removed, the two remaining ends of the bowel are joined together (anastomosed).

You will likely have a 1-2 week admission in hospital following this procedure, and receive postoperative care from Dr Urquhart's hospital team. This information sheet is in relation to when you have returned home, following this admission.

Expected Postoperative Effects:

- You will very likely experience pain and discomfort following this procedure. For this, you will be prescribed pain medication.
- Your bowel function may take some time to return to baseline. You may experience loose stools, increased frequency of motions, urgency, increased wind and bloating. Please contact the office if you experience any of these.
- If your bowel movements are particularly active, avoiding high fibre foods may help until your function has returned to baseline. From there, you can gradually reintroduce high fibre foods.

Returning to work and activities:

- Most patients require at least 4 weeks off from work following the procedure, however, as full recovery extends for 3 months, you may feel you require additional time off. Our office can provide a medical certificate if required. If your job involves heavy lifting or strenuous activity, you will require additional time off or certain restrictions when returning to work within the 3 month recovery period.
- You should ensure you stay hydrated with 8-10 glasses of liquid per day.
- You should avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity for 12 weeks. You can gradually increase the weight you lift each week, with max 1kg during the first week, 2kg in the second week, and so on.
- For at least the first 2 weeks, you should rest as needed. This surgery is a major undertaking, and you will need to give your body adequate time to heal. If something hurts or feels like pulling on your surgery site, stop the activity immediately.
- You should do some gentle exercise each day (walking is best), but nothing that causes pain or discomfort.
- You should avoid swimming until the area is fully healed.
- You can gradually reintroduce gentle aerobic exercise from 3-4 weeks.
- Do not drink alcohol, drive, operate heavy machinery, or sign legal documents for at least 24-48 hours, or while on pain medication.
- Do not drive for at least 2 weeks postoperatively. You should check with your health insurance to determine if they have any specific stipulations regarding this.

Wound Care:

- When you are discharged from the hospital you will have dressings on your laparoscopic wounds. This is usually a waterproof dressing called Comfeel. Please keep this dressing intact for 7-10 days, or until they fall off on their own.
- You can shower as normal with the dressing as this will be waterproof. Pat the area dry.
- The stitches used are usually dissolvable. If they are not, Dr Urquhart will arrange a review to remove them.
- After 7-10 days, the dressing can be removed. You will be able to see the healing wound. You can, if you feel more comfortable, cover the wound with a simple cover dressing to prevent it from rubbing on clothes, but this is not necessary.
- If you have any concerns about your wound (redness, swelling, or discharge) please contact the office. We may ask you to forward a photograph of the wound. It is normal for the wound site to initially have some redness as the wound heals.
- Ice Packs to the surgical site, over insulation, can help to ease discomfort. Your incision may drain fluid that is clear or slightly bloody. Keep the incision site as clean and dry as possible.

Follow-Up Appointment:

You should call the office on 1300 008 883 to arrange a postoperative appointment with Dr Urquhart. This should be made within 4-8 weeks.

Contact the rooms if you experience any of the following:

- Persistent and increasing pain
- Increasing abdominal or groin swelling
- Fever, chills, or high temperature
- If the incision site feels hot
- Swelling, redness, bleeding or foul-smelling drainage from the wound
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Difficulty passing urine or bowel movements

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the clinic on 1300 008 883. If you begin to feel unwell after hours, please contact the after-hours nurse at St Vincent's Hospital, or present to your nearest emergency department.