

Post-Prostatectomy Notes

Bruce Williams

I had an April 2018 robotically-assisted radical prostatectomy, and by all accounts, it appears to have gone very well. Based on my own experience, the following were beneficial and are shared with the intent that others undergoing this procedure will find them helpful. I am not a medical professional; you should confirm with a competent authority of your own choosing the suitability of any/all of the following for your own consumption/use. I am independent and have no relationship to or with any of the named items, or their producers/retailers, other than as a consumer/user; you should evaluate and determine their suitability for your own consumption/use, relying on competent professional guidance of your own choosing. Product names are the property of their owners.

Suggestions

- As far in advance of your surgery as possible, learn about and begin practicing Kegel/pelvic floor muscle exercises to help control the post surgical urinary incontinence you will experience. Information is available on the Internet (e.g., "webmd.com").
- Explore www.ustoo.org. This is the website of the Us Too International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network and contains a wealth of useful information to help you fight the disease and take action.
- If your pre-surgical instructions include magnesium citrate, purchase a couple of extra bottles in case you need them to assist in relieving post-surgical constipation. Consider: Equate brand, grape or cherry flavored 10 FL Oz. Avoid acidic flavors (e.g., lemon) to minimize acidic burps. Take the extra bottles with you to the hospital, in case the hospital's care giver offers magnesium citrate to you for relief, but has only lemon-type-flavored product available.
- Particularly while hospitalized, smell foods before consuming them, with particular sensitivity to avoiding spices you wish to avoid burping for what may be several days.
- Prior to removal of your stitches, catheter, and drainage tube, ensure that you are current on your pain medication at your prescriber's specified maximum dosage. This assumes your drainage tube was not removed prior to your leaving the surgical facility, and that it, your stitches, and your catheter are being removed approximately one week after your surgery. (I chose to reduce pain medication at the first opportunity, and in hindsight, would prefer to have, on an exception basis to this reduced dosage regimen, consumed the medication's maximum allowable dose roughly two hours prior to the removal of these items, and maintained the full pain medication level for at least 24 hours before resuming reduced, less-frequent doses. **Note:** Be sensitive to timing so as **not** to not consume more medication than prescribed.)
- Make lists.
 - ✓ Medications: times and amounts consumed.
 - ✓ Urine bag: times and amounts emptied, colors (e.g., light beer, dark beer, reddish, etc. Use descriptors meaningful to you and that will help you identify changes so that you can communicate them to others if the need arises).
 - ✓ Drainage bag: times and amounts emptied, colors (e.g., dark red, light red, etc. Use descriptors meaningful to you and that will help you identify changes so that you can communicate them to others if the need arises).

Helpful products for home use following your surgery

- Equate Assurance Premium Quilted Underpad(s), XL 30" X 36", 30 Count, Maximum absorbency (sit/lay on these).

Post-Prostatectomy Notes, continued

- Gauze pads (coated and uncoated).
- Poise Pads, Regular Length, Moderate Absorbency, (for application over bandage at drainage tube; do not remove pad's backing, hold in place with paper medical tape, change as needed). This assumes your drainage tube was not removed prior to your leaving the surgical facility, and that it is being removed approximately one week after your surgery.
- 3M brand Micropore paper tape to hold gauze pads and Poise pads in place (other brands irritated my skin; vary the tape placement to minimize potential irritation).
- Assurance Men's Underwear, S/M, Maximum, 40 Count, (for use following removal of your catheter and drainage tube).
- Member's Mark Total Protection Underwear for Men, S/M, Maximum Absorbency, 88 Count (also for use following removal of your catheter and drainage tube). Note: This may be the same product as the Assurance Men's Underwear, packaged/sold differently.
- Depend Flex-Fit Underwear for Men, S/M Maximum Absorbency 32 Count (recommended as an alternative to the similar, less-expensive, Assurance/Member's Mark products; Depend were more comfortable in my tailbone area for sleep/bed/night use, while Assurance/Member's Mark were fine otherwise).
- A + D First Aid Ointment (for application to the skin at the base of your tailbone to prevent/treat the side effects of lying on your back for a prolonged period).
- Great Value Prune 100% Juice, Not From Concentrate (for regularity or as a laxative; relieved my constipation when the recommended stool softeners, laxatives, ripe pears and prunes failed to do so). After relieving my initial constipation, I chose to begin each day with a chilled 6 FL Oz glass of this prune juice to achieve and maintain regularity.
- Acetaminophen (for pain).
- Ibuprofen (for fever).
- Tums Antacid Mint 1000, Ultra strength 1000, 72 Tablets (I found this flavor produced less acidic burps than others.) **Note: Check with physician/pharmacist for drug interactions; e.g., do not take with Ciprofloxacin.**
- Parent's Choice Fragrance Free Baby Wipes (for general cleansing, **not** the areas immediately surrounding your incisions).
- Coloplast Bedside-Care Foam, product 67146 (8.1 FL Oz for genital cleansing, no-rinse product for use shortly after surgery, and highly suitable for longer term frequent use with rinsing).
- Clean, empty, yogurt or cottage cheese containers (24/32 FL Oz size for genital region rinsing after Coloplast/other cleansing).
- Parent's Choice Pediatric Electrolyte Solution, unflavored.