

## Radical Prostatectomy Tips

**Note: these tips were written for those undergoing open surgery but can certainly be applied to laparoscopic and/or robotic surgery.**

**DISCLAIMER: I am not a physician or member of the medical community. As such please consult with your own physician before implementing any of the suggestions or recommendations contained in this document.**

### Pre-Surgery:

- Make sure all Pre-certifications/Authorizations are in place with your health insurance company. Normally hospital or surgeon does this. Double-check!
- Ensure all Health Proxy/Living Will forms are in order and hospital has copy.
- Do kegel exercises to minimize incontinence. Consider biofeedback to ensure you are doing them correctly before surgery. Start at least a month pre-surgery, if possible.
- Buy oversized sweats for comfort. Buy other necessary items listed below in Post-surgery area, as necessary.
- Investigate additions and/or changes to daily supplements such as lycopene and Vitamin D. Consider making “healthier” changes to your diet.
- Walk as much as possible before surgery to maximize being in the best shape you can be pre-surgery. (Post surgery - resume walking as much as possible asap)
- Look into mindful meditation and/or self-hypnosis before surgery. Helpful in relaxing and healing. Memorial Sloan Kettering has a CD available at their Integrative Med Center at very reasonable cost.
- Talk with your doctor about taking Viagra or comparable, daily, for post surgery penile rehabilitation (blood flow). Evidence points towards starting 2-4 weeks PRE-surgery and continuing for at least one year to maximize potency. See a specialist in Sexual Function pre-surgery.
- Consider splurging for a private room in the hospital to avoid the potential for having a “room-mate” in lots of pain. Also this makes it easier for spouse/partner to stay overnight. Tell the pre-surgical testing people that you want a private room - but you may have to actually arrange for it the day of surgery.
- Consider having Caseworker in hospital request authorization from insurance for Visiting Nurse and/or Physical Therapist at home post surgery. May be necessary for surgeon to approve. If approved, Visiting Nurse Services, etc. can relieve whoever is taking care of you post surgery either with a nurse or a home health care aide.
- If feasible have a great meal the weekend before surgery!

## Post-Surgery:

- If you will be on vicodin or other pain meds, note that they can be constipating, so talk with your physician about taking Colace or equivalent after surgery to prevent or minimize constipation. Also consider a pro-biotic such Culturelle (which is like a super-dose of the acidophilus in yogurt) for digestion.
- Get a small pillow to hold against your incision when coughing or sneezing. You might want to also have extra pillows on the bed, as well.
- If swelling/pain of testicles occurs after surgery take a small washcloth and roll it up, then place between bed and testicles while lying on your back or sitting up.
- Consider not bothering to switch back and forth between the overnight and travel catheters unless really necessary. The travel catheter doesn't hold very much and it can be difficult to change back and forth. Instead, when walking, put the regular (aka overnight) catheter in a shopping bag.
- Find suitable places catheter bag can be placed. i.e. some place to hang it from while in shower, and perhaps a little stool for it to be placed on, at side of bed at night. The catheter bag has to be lower than you. You don't want to have it kicked accidentally as that will cause catheter to twist and cause pain. In the shower, you may find that you will be more comfortable with the bag detached from the catheter tube, assuming you do not mind urinating in the shower.
- It is important to find the right spot to tape the catheter, in order to hold it in place so as to not tug. So if it is too tight, try adjusting.
- Get Surgi-gel (probably hospital will give you some but if not tube is very cheap) and lubricate penis area where catheter goes in at least twice a day.
- As it is not possible to predict your continence in advance make preparations. Consider:

Pads to be placed between the mattress pad and sheets -- they are around 1 foot by 2 feet long. One brand that comes to mind is called "Tranquility Pads". Also consider a waterproof mattress pad.

For pads that you will be wearing consider purchasing and trying on a variety of overnight and day pads to see which fit best. Many continence web sites sell such "variety packs". After surgery it's much more difficult to try lots of brands on. Everyone is different in terms of what will fit best. There are many more varieties available on the web than are found at your local druggist.

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