

Laura's Tips & Tricks for Lap-Band Surgery

Here are some useful tips for those who just had the surgery and those of you being banded soon. They are just some observations, tips, and tricks that worked for me, and may or may not work for you. Take what you can use and leave the rest.

1. Before the surgery

There are a couple of things you should prepare for after the surgery, and some things you may want to have on hand just in case (in addition to what the doctors have told you, vitamins, calcium, etc). Even if you never need them, better to have and not need than need and not have! They are the following:

- ◆ A stool softener; the pain meds coupled with dehydration because you may be sick from the pain meds or the anesthesia afterward, can make it difficult to have a bowel movement. The last thing you want to do is strain your muscles when you have stitches and are trying to heal.
- ◆ Panty liners; for the women especially (I can't speak for the men) getting up from the chair or bed immediately after surgery to go to the bathroom can be slow and difficult. That stress can cause you to have some incontinence because you can't really hold your stomach muscles tight enough to control your bladder well, because it HURTS! So....having some of those little helpers can save a lot of laundry (especially if you have a long trip to the bathroom or stairs to climb).

2. Upset stomach

Make some hot tea and put ginger slices in it (either the sliced from a jar, but not pickled, or the crystallized pieces, even fresh will work). Leave the ginger in while your tea steeps and remove it just before you drink the tea. Ginger is a natural and potent cure for stomach problems (much better than ANY of the meds docs have given me over the years with my migraines!). It usually works really fast as well. Visit <http://www.gingerpeople.com> to get some ginger chews (savory little candies that work miracles) or you can buy them locally using the "Find a Store Near You" tool on this site.

3. Pain in your chest, and probably your back and shoulder (if it is not there yet it probably will be),

That is most likely from the gas left in your stomach from the surgery. They pump your stomach full of gas to distend it so they can get to what they want and not damage anything else (it's part of the laparoscopic

technique). The trouble is they can't get all of it back out, you have to expel it. The gas rises in the body so it goes to the highest part of your body (your chest if you lay on your back, your hip if you lay on your side, your head if you sit upright for a long time without moving around). Two things you can do to help with that and neither is easy right now.

- ◆ Move! Walk around as much as you can, I know it is difficult but once you start passing the gas, it will get much easier because that gas is also pushing against your incisions.
- ◆ Lying on my stomach REALLY helped me expel the gas! It was hard to get there but it felt so good once I did. It didn't smell so good because I started farting like a sailor. I sounded like a slow leak in the Goodyear blimp, but boy did it feel good! Get some help getting turned over but if you can do it, I really recommend it. (I checked with the docs right after my surgery about doing that and they said it would not hurt anything.)
- ◆ Nullo works very well to eliminate the smell: www.nullo.com

4. Sleeping/Resting

One more suggestion is to get one of those body pillows (the big long ones). That really helped me for a couple of weeks until all the soreness was gone and I got used to feeling the port inside. I can't sleep on my back, only my side, or better yet, my stomach. So I would lay on my side wrap my body around the pillow to support my stomach and that way it wasn't pulling on my incisions and cushioned the "landing" so to speak.

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