



# SURGERY AT HALTON HEALTHCARE

*Bowel Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (BERAS)*

## Welcome to Halton Healthcare

This booklet will help you on your path to recovery following surgery. Please read it, and bring it with you to all appointments, including your scheduled surgery date.

This booklet belongs to:

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## **Bowel Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (BERAS) at Halton Healthcare**

This booklet will help you understand what is going to happen before, during and after your bowel surgery. Our surgical team at Halton Healthcare including surgeons, nurses, anesthesiologists and anesthesiologist assistants collaborated to provide you with this important information.

The information in this booklet is for educational purposes only, and is not intended to replace the advice of your surgeon. Please contact your surgeon if you have specific questions about your surgery.

Please read this booklet carefully and share this information with your family. Bring this booklet to all your appointments, and ask questions about anything you do not understand.

*This material is for general informational purposes only and does not replace individual advice or counsel of your health care provider. If you have questions about your personal medical situation, please call your healthcare provider.*

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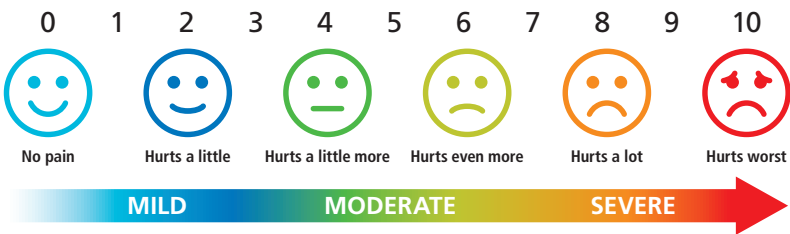
# About Bowel Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (BERAS)

Bowel Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (BERAS) is a method of surgical care that has been shown to help patients recover faster from surgery. BERAS is a series of actions that you and your healthcare team will follow before, during, and after your surgery.

The goal of BERAS is to minimize the effect of surgical risk on your body. This helps you to recover from your surgery faster and with less pain. BERAS has been well-studied, and is used in most acute care hospitals in Ontario. It is safe and effective.

## The top six things you need to know!

1. Please bring a reusable bag(s) that will hold your belongings, clothing and shoes during your surgery.
2. Please bring your booklet with you to the pre-operative appointment and the day of surgery.
3. Your nurses will ask you to rate your pain using a scale of 0-10 (0 being no pain, 10 being the worst pain you have ever had). Our goal is for your pain to be less than a 4.



4. The length of time people stay in hospital after surgery varies. People stay up to 4 days in hospital after surgery, but this is specific to the individual.
5. Your family can bring you in food if you wish. Please check with your nurse on your unit following your surgery to find out what food you can have.
6. If you are sick or need to cancel your surgery, please call your surgeon's office as soon as possible.

# Preparing For Your Surgery

## 1. Planning Ahead

You and your healthcare providers will work as a team to make sure your surgery goes smoothly. There are several things you can do in the weeks before your surgery to help:

- Stop smoking tobacco and cannabis products
  - This reduces the risk of lung problems, increases your body's ability to heal after your surgery, and decreases the risk of infection.
  - **It is strongly suggested that you stop smoking, or cut down significantly, for at least 3 weeks before your surgery.**
- Stop or reduce alcohol consumption
  - Excessive alcohol use can lead to complications after surgery. It is recommended that you reduce the number of alcoholic drinks before your surgery date. Discuss this with your surgeon.
- Plan ahead for your return home
  - Stock your fridge and pantry with pre-prepared, healthy, easy-to-digest meals. Have lots of liquids available. You may need some help with household chores such as laundry and groceries.
- Things to bring to the hospital in addition to this booklet:
  - Your Ontario Health Card.
  - All of the medications you are currently taking (in their original containers).
  - Cane, crutch, or walker, if you use one, labelled with your name and phone number.
  - Reading glasses, dentures and hearing aids in a case, labelled with your name and phone number.
  - **Do not bring large amounts of money or valuables with you to the hospital (jewelry, rings, etc.).**
- Medications
  - Refer to the directions provided by the nursing team or pharmacist on the day of your preoperative appointment regarding what medications to stop or continue prior to surgery.

## 2. What to do the Day Before Surgery

- Please drink a high carbohydrate drink at bedtime the night before your surgery. These drinks contain a lot of sugar and will help you feel stronger and recover faster.



Examples include apple juice, cranberry cocktail, sweetened iced tea, and sports drinks without caffeine such as Gatorade® and PowerAde®. You may drink these sugary drinks even if you are diabetic. Do not drink any “diet” drinks or any carbonated drinks.

- Drink 3 glasses (800mL) of a high carbohydrate drink at bedtime the night before surgery.
- Drink another 1 1/2 glasses (400mL) of a high carbohydrate drink before leaving for the hospital (3 hours before your surgery).
- **Stop drinking any fluids once you leave for the hospital.**
- Shaving and showering before surgery
  - **Do not shave the hair on your body 24 hours before your surgery.** This increases your chance of getting an infection. If hair needs to be removed, it will be done by the surgeon before your surgery.
  - **Shower or bathe the evening before and morning of your surgery.** If you were told by your surgeon to purchase a chlorhexidine wash, please follow those instructions.
- Bowel Preparation
  - Your surgeon may prescribe a bowel prep for you to perform the day before surgery. Please follow the instructions from your surgeon.
- Pre-Operative antibiotics
  - Your surgeon may prescribe some oral antibiotics to take the day before surgery. Please follow the instructions from your surgeon in regards to what time to take these medications.
- Medications
  - Refer to the directions provided by the nursing team or pharmacist on the day of your preoperative appointment regarding what medications to stop or continue the day of surgery.

### 3. What to Do After Surgery

Have someone bring in the following:

- A bathrobe and loose comfortable clothing.
- Non-slip slippers or shoes.
- Personal hygiene items: toothbrush, toothpaste, hair brush, mouthwash, deodorant, lip balm, hand cream.
- Your sleep apnea machine (if you use one) labelled with your name and phone number.
- 2 packs of chewing gum (preferably sugarless). Chewing gum will help your bowels remain active after surgery. Let your surgeon know if you cannot chew gum.
- A credit card, in case you would like to rent a TV/telephone in your room.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Reading material (optional).

## Exercises For After Surgery

It is very important that you be as active as possible after your surgery. Lying in bed slows down your recovery and increases your risk of complications like pneumonia and blood clots and can cause your muscles to weaken quickly. The more often you are up, the better you will feel. You should walk **at least** 3 times per day and have all of your meals up in a chair.

In addition, try doing the following exercises **every hour while awake**:

#### 1. Deep breathing

- Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, then exhale slowly through your mouth with your lips pursed
- Repeat 5 times



Breathe out



Breathe  
stomach  
into hands

## 2. Splinted cough

- Hold a pillow tightly against your tummy and cough twice in a row



Hug pillow



Cough



Front view

## 3. Ankle pumps

- Lying on your back or sitting in a chair, bend your feet up and down at the ankle
- Repeat 10 times



Find a comfortable position



Pump ankles up



Pump ankles down

## 4. Static quads

- Lying on your back with your legs straight, pull your toes up and push the back of your knee down firmly against the bed
- Hold 5 seconds – relax
- Repeat 10 times



## 5. Static glutes

- Lying on your back with your legs straight, tighten your buttock (seat) muscles by squeezing them together as hard as you can.
- Hold 5 seconds – relax
- Repeat 10 times



Squeeze your bum muscles



## Eating After Surgery

Your bowels may not work normally after surgery. This is expected. Your bowels will be lazy for a while, and you may feel bloated or a little sick to your stomach.

You will start drinking fluids the evening of your surgery. Please drink small amounts at a time and avoid the use of straws, as this can increase bloating. If you feel sick, do not force it.

You will start eating solid foods in hospital the day after your surgery. You should eat as much or as little as you feel like. Your family can bring you food from home if you prefer. Please check with your medical team about what foods you can eat. You should always sit in a chair at meal time, even if you eat very little.

You may not have a bowel movement before you go home, but you will be able to tolerate solid food.



If you feel that your pain is not well controlled, please speak to your nurse. There are always additional options to find a solution that works.

## BERAS Activities to Expect After Surgery

### Day of Surgery:

- Inform nurse if pain reaches 4/10 on pain scale.**
- Start deep breathing and coughing exercises.
- Sit up with assistance and dangle legs for at least 10-15min at the side of the bed, 2-3 hours after returning to your room.
- Begin to take sips of clear fluids.

## Day 1 After Surgery:

- Do deep breathing and coughing exercises 10 times every hour while awake.
- Chew gum for 5 minutes, 3 times a day.
- Sit in chair for all meals.
- With assistance, get up and walk in the hallway at least 3 times during the day.
- You should get out of bed frequently during the day.
- Tell the nurse if your pain reaches 4/10 on the pain scale.
- Have your urinary catheter removed by the nurse 24 hours after colon surgery.

## Day 2 After Surgery:

- Do deep breathing and coughing exercises.
- Sit in chair for all meals.
- With minimal assistance, walk in the hallway at least 3 times a day.
- You should get out of bed frequently during the day.
- Tell the nurse if your pain reaches 4/10 on the pain scale.
- Get up and walk to the bathroom to urinate.
- Eat solid foods, continue to drink fluids.
- Chew gum for 5 minutes, 3 times a day.
- Tell nurse/doctor if you pass gas.
- Complete activity log and review with nurse.
- Get ready to go home tomorrow if you have had colon surgery.

## Day 3/4 After Surgery:

- Do deep breathing and coughing exercises.
- Sit in a chair for all meals.

- Frequently walk without assistance.
- Tell the nurse if your pain reaches 4/10 on the pain scale.
- Eat solid foods, continue to drink fluids.
- Chew gum for 5 minutes, 3 times a day.
- Have the urinary catheter removed by nurse 72 hours after rectal surgery.

### **Before You Go Home:**

- Review your discharge instructions with your nurse.
- Leave hospital with a prescription for pain medication and a scheduled follow-up visit.

## **Checklist For Going Home**

- You should have no nausea or vomiting.
- You should be able to eat solid food and drink regular fluids.
- You should be passing gas.
- You do not have to have a bowel movement before you go home.
- You should be able to urinate normally.
- You should be walking and moving like you did before surgery. You may not be able to walk as far, which is fine.
- If you have stairs in your home, you should have enough strength and energy to go up and down the stairs.
- All of your questions or concerns about your ongoing recovery at home should have been answered by your healthcare team.
- You should know when to follow up with your surgeon after you are home.
- Call your surgeon, your family doctor, or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have any concerns.

# Once You Are Home

## You should NOT:

- Lift anything heavier than 10 pounds or do abdominal exercises or high-intensity aerobic exercises for the first 4-6 weeks after surgery or as directed by your surgeon.
- You should not drive while you are taking strong pain medication.

## You SHOULD:

- Eat small and more frequent meals.
- Chew your food well and eat slowly.
- Eat anything you want unless advised by your surgeon or dietitian.
- Continue to drink regular fluids.
- Use pain pills and stool softeners, if needed, as prescribed.
- AVOID non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like Advil, or as directed by your surgeon.
- While showering you do not need to cover your incision(s).
- Continue to be active and gradually increase your activity level. Listen to your body and take frequent rest breaks. It is normal to feel tired after surgery.
- Resume most normal activities once you are pain-free, including sexual intercourse.
- Follow your wound care instructions.

## Support After Surgery



**Call your surgeon, your family doctor, or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have any of the following:**

- A fever (temperature greater than 38°C or 100°F)
- Vomiting, constant nausea, significant bloating
- Not able to keep food or fluids down
- Redness, swelling, odour, pus, or increasing pain from your incision
- Blood in your stool
- Stomach pain that your pain medicine does not help with
- Trouble breathing

## Compliments or Concerns

If you have questions, concerns, feedback, or compliments about your care while you are admitted to hospital, please speak to a member of your care team, including your nurse, charge nurse, or patient care manager. If there are matters requiring further attention, or you have been discharged home and have concerns, please contact Patient Relations at 905-338-4138 or [patientrelations@haltonhealthcare.com](mailto:patientrelations@haltonhealthcare.com).

## Patient Resources

Surgical  
Services  
at Halton  
Healthcare:



Web page  
for Patients  
at Halton  
Healthcare:



# Acknowledgments

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### **Georgetown Hospital**

1 Princess Anne Drive  
Georgetown, ON L7G 2B8  
905-873-0111



### **Milton District Hospital**

725 Bronte Street South  
Milton, ON L9T 9K1  
905-878-2383



### **Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital**

3001 Hospital Gate  
Oakville, ON L6M 0L8  
905-845-2571



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