

PERI ANESTHESIA CARE DEPARTMENT- SURGICAL SERVICES

BLEEDING AFTER SURGERY

Discharge Instructions: After Your Surgery

Bleeding after surgery may happen at any time. You may bleed right away after surgery or a few days later. The bleeding may come from your incision or may happen inside of your body.

What are the causes?

Bleeding may happen from a place where tissues or blood vessels are closed with staples or stitches. The surgery may have hurt one of your organs. Bleeding may be caused by problems with how the blood clots. An infection or new injury to the area may cause your wound to bleed.

What can make this more likely to happen?

You are more likely to have problems with bleeding after surgery if you:

- Have high blood pressure, diabetes, heart failure, or kidney problems
- Take drugs that thin your blood
- Take certain vitamins and herbs, such as garlic and fish oil
- Are overweight
- Smoke
- Have certain medical conditions that cause your blood not to form clots at the wound, like hemophilia or von Willebrand disease

What are the main signs?

You may have bleeding from your wound or the area around your wound may become swollen and sore. You may notice bruises or a change in the color of fluid coming from a tube or drain. You may have low blood pressure or higher heart rate than normal or feel short of breath.

You may feel anxious, weak, faint, or dizzy when you stand. You may have less urine than normal.

How does the doctor diagnose this health problem?

The doctor will ask you questions about your history and do an exam. The doctor may order:

- Lab tests
- X-rays
- Ultrasounds
- Other tests to find the source of your bleeding

How does the doctor treat this health problem?

Your care will be based on what is causing the **bleeding**. To help stop the **bleeding**, your doctor may put pressure on the area and/or may restitch, glue, or cauterize the incision. You may need a blood transfusion. You may need more surgery for the doctor to find out what is causing the **bleeding**. The doctor may place a drain to get rid of extra fluids in your wound.

What drugs may be needed?

The doctor may order drugs to:

- Help with pain
- Fight or prevent an infection
- Help make the blood clot
- Sometimes, the doctor may want to give you blood to replace what you have lost. You may also need other blood products to help stop the **bleeding** or IV fluids to replace the fluids you have lost.

Reference (s): Lippincott Solutions (Walters Kluwer, 2025)
