

# Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS): your guide

## What is ERAS?

Enhanced Recovery after Surgery (ERAS) is a protocol used by your hospital to improve outcomes after surgery. These guidelines help all members of your care team ensure that you do and feel your best after surgery. Your care team will include surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nurses.

## Why ERAS?

ERAS utilizes a bundle of interventions proven to improve your recovery after surgery. These interventions lower the chance of complications after surgery, including infections, blood clots, and ileus (when your intestines are slow to move after surgery). In addition, ERAS allows patients to go home sooner after surgery, reduces the need of opioids, and improves patient satisfaction.

## Key parts of ERAS

- Patient preparation and education prior to surgery
- Decreasing the amount of time without food before and after surgery
- Using multiple classes of pain medications
- Performing minimally invasive surgery (laparoscopic or robotic surgery) when feasible
- Getting out of bed as soon as it is safe after surgery

## What will ERAS look like for me?

### Before surgery

- Your surgeon will review the details, risks, and benefits of surgery and how to be your healthiest prior to surgery
- Your surgeon and anesthesiologist will give you instructions on when to stop eating and drinking prior to surgery
- Your surgeon may recommend an antibiotic with or without additional medications to help empty your colon prior to surgery

### Day of surgery and immediately after surgery

- You will likely have some pain after surgery, but your surgical team will give you different types of pain medication before, during, and after surgery to control your pain
- After surgery, your surgeon will prefer that you take pain medications by mouth rather than by an IV
- You will have leg squeezing devices to keep blood moving throughout the legs to reduce the risk of blood clots
- Your surgeon may recommend a blood thinner during and after surgery to further reduce the risk of blood clots
- You will have several devices attached to you during surgery to keep your body at the right temperature

- You will receive intravenous fluid to keep you hydrated, but your surgeon will not give you excessive amounts of fluids
- You will be asked to eat a normal diet and to listen to your body when you get full
- You will be asked to get out of bed, sit in the chair, and walk early and frequently after surgery

### Discharge home after surgery

- The timing of discharge after surgery depends on the procedures done during surgery, as well as your other medical conditions; many patients undergoing laparoscopic or robotic surgery go home the day of surgery
- You will need to be active, get out of bed, and walk early and often
- You can resume your normal diet but may find that small meals are easier to tolerate the first few days after surgery
- Your pain will be controlled with many different oral medications, including opioids
- You may be asked to be take blood thinners for up to 1 month to reduce the risk of blood clots after surgery
- Your surgical team will give you education on how to care for your incisions, how to take your medications, and what concerns to call your provider with



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This ERAS factsheet was developed by the SGO Education Committee's 2023-2024 ERAS Subcommittee, featuring primary authors: Diogo Torres, MD, Clarissa Polen-De, MD, Madeleine Courtney-Brooks, MD, MPH, along with discussion input from Lee-may Chen, MD, Nawar Latif, MD, MPH, MSCE, Brenna Swift, MD, Colin Sitler, DO, and Erica Hope, MD. Special thanks to Jessica Walchonski, PA-C for her contribution to the recording of the video. Also, thanking Gregg Nelson, MD and Sean Dowdy, MD for their input as content experts and the FWC Patient Education Committee for the collaboration opportunity.