



INFORMATION BOOKLET

ORCHIECTOMY

PART C

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PART A

PART B

14. THE HEALING PROCESS AND THE COMMON POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Healing is a complex process that varies according to each patient's individual characteristics and can be influenced by factors such as inflammation, infection, tension on wounds, poor circulation, alcohol consumption, smoking, poor diet, and so on.

Understanding the stages of this process and its potential complications can help you take appropriate steps to manage your recovery better and achieve optimal healing.

Below is a list of the most common complications. They are described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

- Sudden increase in swelling of the scrotum associated with severe pain (**hematoma**).
- Heavy bleeding: the amount of blood continues to increase (**active bleeding**).
- Reopening of the wounds (**dehiscence**).
- Signs and symptoms of **infection** in wounds or scrotum.

14.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

❖ Wound infection

Once you return home, you should **check your incisions and surgical site daily** for signs of **infection** until your wounds are completely healed.

Watch for the following signs and symptoms:

- redness
- sensation of heat
- sensitivity
- severe swelling
- yellowish or greenish, foul-smelling discharge from the wound
- increased pain at the surgical site
- shivering and fever exceeding 38,5 °C or 101 °F for more than 24 hours.

If you experience any of these symptoms, please notify us promptly. Consult your healthcare professional to determine whether you have an infection and to obtain the appropriate treatment. If your healthcare professional determines that you have an infection, please complete for available in the Infection questionnaire task on Monarch.

❖ Alcohol and tobacco

Avoid alcohol consumption for two weeks after surgery.

Also, avoid smoking cigarettes or electronic cigarettes, and nicotine substitutes (such as Nicorette®) for six to eight weeks after your surgery. These products can constrict small blood vessels and slow wound healing.

14.2 THE FIRST WEEK FOLLOWING SURGERY

❖ Pain management

It is normal to experience some pain after surgery. The intensity of the pain varies from person to person. **It is usually most intense during the first 24 to 72 hours.** Pain is often caused by swelling in the scrotum, but you may also experience pain in the groin area because of the severed spermatic cords.

The greater your pain, the more difficult it will be to relieve. Here are some recommendations to help you manage it.

- **To reduce pain, swelling must be minimized.** To achieve this, it is essential to apply ice frequently during the first 48 to 72 hours. Do not apply ice directly to the skin. Use a clean cloth.
- If you were prescribed narcotic analgesics, make sure to take them regularly and as prescribed by your surgeon, **for at least 48 hours** after your surgery. Do not wait until your pain exceeds a 4/10 before taking them. For better pain control, we recommend combining them with acetaminophen (Tylenol®).
- **Rest is important** in the days following your surgery. It is normal to feel tired after surgery. Resting will help you recover more quickly.
- If you were prescribed Celebrex®, do not take any other anti-inflammatory medication (**such as Advil®, Motrin® or Naproxen®**) **at the same time**. If you did not receive a Celebrex® prescription, anti-inflammatories are authorized the day after surgery.
- Find alternative non-medical methods to relieve your pain, such as relaxation techniques, listening to music, or spending time with a loved one.

Always follow your doctor's prescription and consult your pharmacist or treating physician if you have any questions about safely taking acetaminophen. The [Narcotics Analgesics Guide](#) also contains important information.

Consult your healthcare professional or our team if your pain does not subside.

❖ Discharge

Discharge from wounds is normal.

These may be:

- **Blood** for the first few days after surgery.

If the amount of blood means you must change the pad in your underwear every hour, it may be **active bleeding**. Contact your team and send photos and a description of your situation.

- **Clear** (transparent or yellowish) for three weeks after surgery.

If discharge is purulent and foul-smelling, refer to the section on **Infection**

Put dry compresses in your underwear for as long as the discharge persists. Change them every day.

❖ Hygiene

You may shower **48 hours** after surgery, or according to your surgeon's instructions. After that, it is recommended that you shower once a day for wound care.

If you have placed a compress under your scrotum to protect your wounds, you can gently remove it in the shower once it is wet to avoid ripping off the scabs that have formed on your wounds.

1. Use a mild, fragrance-free, alcohol-free bar soap (e.g., Dove® or Ivory®) to clean your wounds.
2. Rinse off excess soap without directing the shower jet directly onto the wounds.
3. Gently pat the wounds dry with a clean towel, then leave them to air dry for around 15 minutes. Never rub wounds.
4. Reinstall clean compresses if you have discharge or to prevent discomfort caused by your underwear rubbing against you.

Then shower every day.

Baths are contraindicated until wounds have completely healed.

❖ Moderate edema (swelling)

You may experience **swelling of the scrotum** for 48 to 72 hours after your procedure, which will subside after several weeks. To help reduce swelling and relieve pain, it is important to apply ice wrapped in a cloth to the area for **48 to 72 hours after the procedure**.

Swelling typically subsides within three months of surgery but may take up to a year to disappear completely. However, severe swelling is abnormal and may indicate an **infection**, **hematoma or seroma**.

❖ Underwear and Clothing

Wear loose-fitting underwear for the first three to four days after surgery and thereafter as you feel comfortable. Avoid tight jeans or pants for the first month.

❖ Ecchymosis

You may experience **bruising** of the scrotum within two to three days after your surgery. It will disappear within a few weeks. Bruising is a common side effect of all surgical procedures.

❖ Hematoma and seroma

A **hematoma** is a complication resulting from active bleeding that causes blood to accumulate under the skin.

Seroma is related to the accumulation of clear bodily fluid, which causes swelling. Seroma can result from a mild accumulation or a more serious build-up.

Certain activities increase the risk of developing a hematoma or seroma. These activities include exerting yourself too hard too soon after surgery, lifting excessive weight, or taking aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications that have not been authorized by your surgeon.

Symptoms of hematoma and seroma are

- increased swelling,
- sudden asymmetry or deformity of the scrotum,
- sudden hardening to the touch,
- localized increase in pain.

**These complications may require a second surgery.
If you suspect a hematoma or seroma, contact our team.**

❖ Resuming your regular medication

After surgery, you can resume your usual medication as prescribed by your surgeon.

If your surgeon has prescribed antibiotics, it is important to take them until the end of the treatment period, even if you do not have any signs or symptoms of infection.

Do not take acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirine® or AAS®) for two weeks after surgery.

❖ Rest and daily activities

A balance between rest and daily activities is essential. Rest for five to seven days after surgery. Then, **resume your daily activities gradually**, according to your tolerance.

As soon as your condition allows, we strongly advise you to walk for a total of at least one hour a day.

For the first month after the surgical procedure, avoid lifting objects weighing more than 4.5 kg (10 lb) and wait six weeks after your procedure before taking part in physical and sporting activities.

We recommend enlisting the help of a loved one to assist with daily chores and provide post-operative support.

❖ Hydration and bowel elimination

Narcotic analgesics and reduced physical activity contribute to constipation.

Here are some guidelines to avoid constipation:

- Drink at least two to three litres of water a day, unless otherwise advised by your surgeon.
- Increase your daily fibre intake (prunes or prune juice, All-Bran Buds® cereals, fruits and vegetables, etc.).
- Reduce your intake of high-fat and high-sugar foods.
- Reduce your intake of caffeinated drinks, such as coffee, tea.
- Avoid soft drinks and alcohol as they contribute to dehydration.
- Establish a physical activity routine by following the instructions in section *Rest and daily activities*.

If the problem persists, please consult your pharmacist.

❖ Driving

Sudden movements, such as those experienced while driving, can lead to complications and pain. For this reason, we recommend waiting **at least five days** before driving again.

Remember it is forbidden to drive a motor vehicle while taking narcotic analgesics.

❖ Dehiscence (reopening) of the wound

Wound reopening is a complication that can be caused by the various factors influencing the healing process. It can also occur if you lift excessive weight, exert physical effort too soon after your surgery, or rub or scrape your incisions.

If your wounds reopen after you remove the dressing, **clean them with mild soap daily**, cover them with a compress and contact us. Usually, surgery is not necessary to close the wound. Although the healing period will be longer, the wound will close on its own from the inside out.

14.3 ONE TO FOUR WEEKS FOLLOWING YOUR SURGICAL PROCEDURE

❖ Medication

Do not take acetylsalicylic acid (aspirine or AAS®) or anti-inflammatory medications (Advil®, Motrin®, Naproxen®) for two weeks after surgery.

❖ Stitches

Your surgical wounds are closed with dissolving stitches, which can take from 30 to 90 days to dissolve completely. There is no need to worry about removal.

It is essential never to pull on the stitches.

If there are adhesive strips under the dressing along the incisions, they will likely fall off in the shower. Otherwise, you can remove them three weeks after your surgery by gently pulling them off under water in the direction of the incision line.

❖ Scars

It is normal for **blackish scabs** to form on incisions. They are part of the normal healing process and form a natural protective layer over the wound. It is important not to rub, scrape or remove them. They will fall off on their own within a week or two.

The incisions may itch. This is a sign that the wounds are healing. Applying ice and massaging the area can help alleviate this symptom. Once the wounds are fully healed and completely closed with no remaining scabs, you can apply fragrance-free moisturizing cream.

Three to six weeks after the procedure, your scars will become **ticker and a darker shade of red**.

It will take six to 18 months for your scars to flatten and soften and begin to fade.

Check your wounds daily to make sure there is no **infection** until they are completely healed.

❖ Scar massage

Remember to wash your hands before and after massaging scars.

- **At least one month** after the surgery and once the wounds are fully healed and the scabs have fallen off, you can start massaging the scars. This will stimulate blood circulation and increase the suppleness of the tissues surrounding the surgical site.
- We recommend continuing scar massage for at least two months to improve scar appearance, increase skin suppleness, and eliminate the sensation of small bumps under the skin.
- Massage the area in a circular motion in the direction of the incision using the vitamin E cream or silicone gel that you have already purchased (see Part B).
- Never apply oil to your incisions.

For more information, please refer to the [*How to massage your scars*](#) document, which will be available in your *Monarch* post-operative pathway.

*If you are considering a vaginoplasty but have not yet undergone a scrotoectomy, it is advisable to massage the scrotal skin. Following an orchiectomy, the scrotal skin tends to shrink, leaving less tissue available for intravaginal skin grafting during vaginoplasty.

- As soon as your wounds are completely healed and the scabs are gone, you can start massaging the scrotum. This will stimulate blood circulation and increase the suppleness of the tissues surrounding the surgical site.
- We suggest continuing to massage the scrotum for a few months to keep the skin supple, if you wish to limit skin retraction.
- Gently massage the scrotum by stretching the skin without causing pain.
- We advise you to never pierce your genital area.

❖ **Sexual intercourse and orgasm**

Please wait at least two to four weeks and until the scars have completely closed before having sexual relations.

Following orchiectomy, the absence of testosterone may affect your sexual function and libido. These effects vary from person to person. Talk to your doctor or hormone prescriber if you are concerned about your situation to discuss the possibilities.

14.4 MORE THAN A MONTH AFTER YOUR SURGICAL PROCEDURE

❖ **Numbness or hypersensitivity of the scrotum**

Trauma to the small nerve endings on the surface of the skin at the incision lines may cause

- slight numbness
- local hypersensitivity
- sensation of heat
- your skin may also feel different to heat or cold.

You may not be able to sense temperature fluctuations. Be careful not to burn the area when exposing it to heat or cold.

Your sensitivity will gradually return as your nerve endings heal. This process may take more than a year.

❖ **Back to daily activities**

You may resume lifting weights of more than 4.5 kg (10 lb) starting in the fourth week after your surgery. To avoid injury, we recommend gradually increasing your weight.

You can **gradually** resume your sporting activities in the sixth week after your surgery.

15. POST-OPERATIVE FOLLOW-UPS

In the weeks following your return home, we will follow up by Monarch to make sure your recovery is progressing well.

15.1 APPOINTMENTS TO PLAN

- Some people may need psychosocial support after surgery. We encourage you to contact your professionals as needed.

- **With our Team**

If you would like a follow-up because of a complication, please contact us at 514 333-1572, extension 200, or send your request via «  My messages » section in Monarch.

If necessary, you can schedule a consultation with your surgeon 1-2 weeks after your surgery. If you live far away, the consultation can be done over the phone. Please contact the GrS Montréal team for a follow-up appointment with your surgeon by calling 514 288-2097.

- **Continue your annual visits with your family physician.**

15.2 HORMONE REPLACEMENT


For your overall health, it is essential to maintain a steady supply of hormones whether estrogen or testosterone.

- **After your surgery, make an appointment with your hormone prescriber to make adjustments if necessary.**

15.3 CANCER MONITORING AND PREVENTION

After an orchiectomy, it is important to follow public health recommendations and your healthcare provider's instructions for monitoring and preventing prostate and other genitourinary cancers.

15.4 CONTACTS DURING HOME RECOVERY

If you have any questions or complications, please contact us via the «  My messages » section on the Monarch platform, or by telephone at 514 333-1572, ext. 200 and leave a message explaining the problem, giving your name and contact details.

If you have any questions about your surgery or post-operative care, **your doctor or nurse at the clinic or CLSC** can contact our team. We recommend that professionals call us at 514 332-7091 or email us at asclepiade@cmcmontreal.com.

Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital if you believe it is an emergency.

RESOURCES

Info-Santé in your region	Québec 811
Emergency service in your region	Canada 911
Your family doctor	
Your pharmacist	
Local community service centre (CLSC) in your region	
<i>Action Santé Travesti(e)s et Transsexuel(le)s du Québec (ASTT(e)Q)</i>	www.astteq.org
<i>Aide aux Trans du Québec</i>	aideauxtrans.com /info@aideauxtrans.com
24-hour toll-free helpline	1 855 909-9038, ext. 1
<i>Fondation Émergence Inc.</i>	www.fondationemergence.org
<i>Coalition des familles LGBT</i>	www.familleslgbt.org
Interligne	www.interligne.co
Hotline (service available in English and French)	1 888 505-1010

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