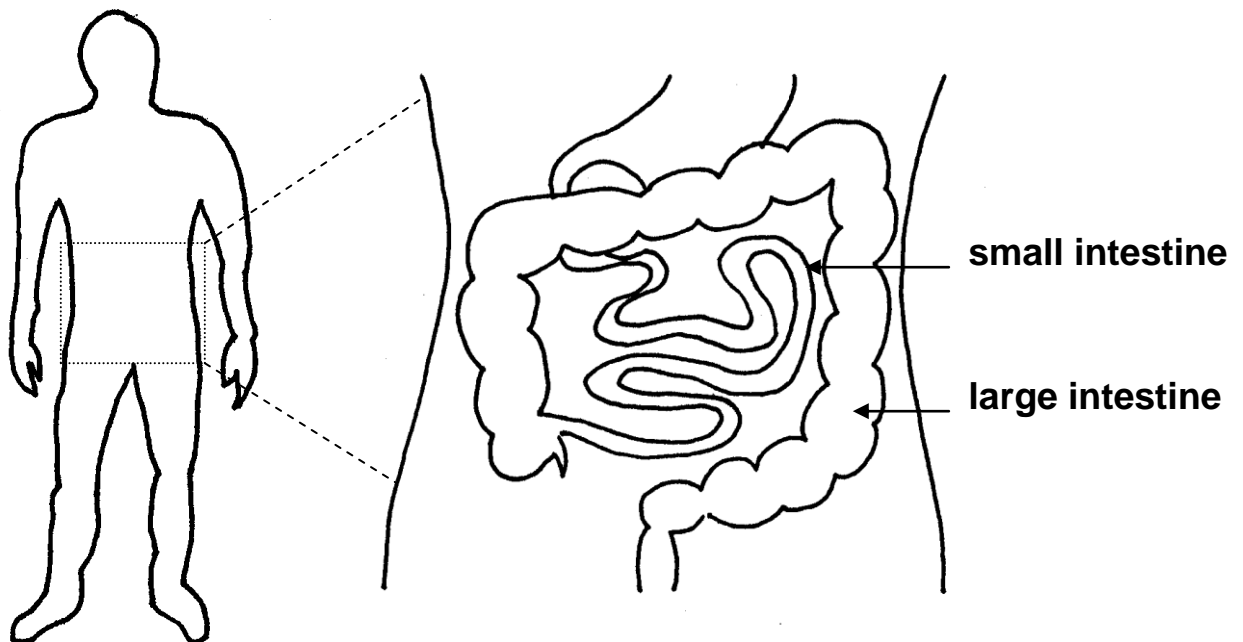

Bowel Resection Surgery (Open Method)

What is a bowel resection?

A bowel resection is surgery to remove a part of the large or small intestine. These parts are shown on this diagram.



Why do I need a bowel resection?

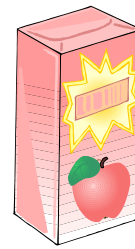
You need a bowel resection to relieve the symptoms caused by a disease or problem in your bowel. Talk with your surgeon about the cause of your bowel problem.

turn over →

How do I prepare for a bowel resection?

Your doctor may tell you to have only clear fluids 2 to 3 days before your surgery. Clear fluids include:

- water
- apple juice
- clear sodas or pop
- consommé soup
- jello, popsicles or freezies
- clear tea or coffee



✗ Do not drink milk or eat any solid foods during this time.

Your doctor or nurse will tell you how to prepare your bowels. You may need a bowel preparation and antibiotics before surgery. The bowel preparation will make you have enough bowel movements to clean out your bowel before surgery. Taking the bowel preparation the correct way is very important to decrease the risk of infection after surgery.

If you take medications regularly, ask your doctor if the time or amount of medication you take needs to be changed before surgery.

What happens during bowel resection surgery?

You will have a general anaesthetic. This means you are asleep during the operation.

The doctor makes an incision in your abdomen and removes the part of your bowel that is causing problems.

How will I feel after surgery?

You may feel pain, discomfort and nausea. You will be given pain control medication in the recovery area to help.

If you have nausea or feel sick to your stomach, tell your nurse. You will be given medication to help.

How can I relieve pain and discomfort?

When you return to your room, ask your nurse for pain control medication. The nurse will let you know how often you can have pain control medication. You may learn how to use a Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) pump to give yourself pain control medication.

Other ways to relieve pain and discomfort are:

- drinking warm fluids
- walking
- any method of relaxation, such as listening to music or deep breathing

When you go home, take the pain control medication suggested by your doctor. Your pain should become less each day. If your pain does not decrease, call your family doctor.



What will happen to me after surgery?

After surgery you will have an intravenous line called an I.V. in your arm. The I.V. is used to give you fluids until you are ready to have fluids by mouth. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when your bowels are active enough for you to begin drinking. Medications can also be given to you through the I.V.

You will have a dressing or tape over your incision. There may be stitches or clips underneath. Your nurse and doctor will check your incision and the dressing often.

You may have a tube in your nose going into your stomach. This tube is called a nasogastric or NG tube. This tube will keep your stomach empty, and may help relieve nausea or vomiting. You will need this tube until your bowels are active enough to have fluids.

While you have this tube, your throat and mouth may feel dry or sore. Your nurse can help you learn how to care for your mouth to prevent dryness. If your doctor allows, you may suck on ice chips or take sips of water.

A few days after your surgery, you will begin to pass gas. It may be several days before you have a bowel movement.

What can I eat?

Your doctor or nurse will tell you when it is safe for you to eat and drink after surgery. Usually you start with clear fluids and gradually increase your diet. It may take several days before you can return to your regular diet.

When you are allowed to eat solid foods, eat foods high in fibre and drink fluids to prevent constipation. Foods high in fibre are whole grain cereals and bread, bran, fruits and vegetables.



You should not strain to have a bowel movement. Straining increases the pressure on your incision. You can prevent straining by having soft bowel movements. Your doctor may order medication to prevent or treat constipation.

You can also help prevent constipation by:

- eating foods high in fibre
- drinking extra fluids
- exercising regularly

Talk to your surgeon or ask to see a dietitian about the amount of fluid to drink if you have kidney or heart problems.

What activity can I do?

After surgery, it is very important for you to do deep breathing, coughing and circulation exercises each hour you are awake. You need to do these exercises even though it may be uncomfortable. Your nurse or physiotherapist can show you how to do these exercises. When you do these exercises, place a pillow or rolled up blanket over your incision. This will give extra support to your incision and prevent straining.

You will get out of bed on the day of your surgery. Ask your nurse to help you the first time you get up. As you feel stronger, you will be able to take longer walks.

Moving and walking as soon as possible after surgery will:

- keep your muscles strong
- prevent breathing problems
- help your blood move around your body
- help your bowels become active and pass gas

Going Home After Bowel Resection Surgery (Open Method)

When will I go home?

You should be able to go home 2 to 10 days after surgery.
This depends on the type of surgery you had.

What activity can I do?

Ask your doctor about activities you can do.

Here are some general guides to follow:

Exercise

You can do moderate exercise like walking.

- ✘ Do not do strenuous exercise like shovelling snow, vacuuming or cutting the lawn.
- ✘ Do not do any heavy lifting for 6 to 8 weeks. Heavy lifting is more than 4 kilograms or 10 pounds. This weight is like a full grocery bag, a small suitcase or a small baby. Gradually resume your usual activities.

Sexual activity

You can have sex when the pain and swelling around your incision are gone and you feel comfortable.

Hygiene

You may have a shower after your surgery. Try not to get your incision too wet. ✘ Do not use soap on the incision, until your stitches or clips are taken out. Dry your incision after you shower.

Going back to work

When you can go back to work will depend on your kind of job. Ask your doctor when you can expect to return to work.

What should I eat and drink at home?

Eat your regular diet, including foods high in fibre and drink extra fluids. It is important to keep your bowel movements soft. You may be given a prescription for a stool softener before leaving hospital.

When should I see my doctor again?

You should have an appointment to see your surgeon after surgery. If you do not have an appointment, call your surgeon's office.

Contact your surgeon if you have:

- swelling or redness at your incision
- bleeding, discharge or a foul smell from your incision
- bulging from your incision
- nausea, vomiting or loss of appetite
- a fever greater than 38°C or 100°F
- no bowel movement after about 48 hours and pain in your abdomen
- pain that gets worse
- chest pain or shortness of breath



