

Bowel surgery stoplight tool

Which zone are you in today: **green**, **yellow** or **red**?

Doctor/Provider: _____

Phone: _____



Green Zone

I'm feeling good.

- My incision is closed, clean, and slightly pink with only a little swelling or tenderness.
- I am passing gas and/or having bowel movements (BM) as expected.
- I am able to eat small meals without feeling sick or throwing up.
- My stoma (if present) looks pink/red and is moist.
- I am gradually increasing my activity each day.
- I am able to maintain an acceptable pain level.
- I am doing OK with my feelings and stress.

How I'll prevent symptoms today

I will:

- Keep my incision clean and care for it the way my doctor/provider has recommended.
- Continue to advance my diet as recommended by my doctor/provider.
- Avoid gas-producing food, raw vegetables, caffeine, and alcohol.
- Drink plenty of water, unless restricted by my doctor/provider.
- Do only the activities my doctor/provider says are safe.
- Take my daily medicine as directed.
- Keep my doctor/provider appointments.
- Do my cough and deep breathing exercises or use hand-held breathing device.



Yellow Zone

I'm not feeling good.

- I have nausea, vomiting, or bloating that doesn't go away.
- I am not passing gas or have not had a regular bowel movement (BM) in 3 days.
- I have had watery, loose BMs for two or more days.
- I am running a fever greater than 101°F, feel very cold, or have body aches.
- My incision has liquid draining from it, looks red, feels warm, or has a bad smell.
- My stoma (if present) is purple, pale, or dry.
- My pain is making me uncomfortable when at rest, despite taking pain medication.
- I have developed a cough and it is harder for me to breathe.

Caution!

Take action TODAY. I will:

- Report these symptoms to my doctor/provider without delay **AND** call my doctor/provider if my symptoms do not improve.

- _____
- _____



Red Zone

I feel awful!

- I have severe stomach pain not relieved by medication.
- My incision has opened up.
- My stoma is black or blue, and nothing is coming out of it.
- I have severe shortness of breath while resting, chest pain, or have fainted.
- I have bright red blood in my stool, ostomy bag, or from my incision.

Get help!

Take action NOW:

- **CALL 911 or seek medical care RIGHT AWAY.**
- While getting help, do this:

- _____
- _____