

Discharge Instructions after Hysterectomy and Vaginal Hysterectomy

Your surgery is over and you now can look forward to steady improvement. Here are answers to some of the most common questions women have when returning home.

Activity

During the first day or two home, rest like you did in the hospital. Be up for meals and bathroom. Going up and down stairs is fine. You may ride in a car, but it is important not to sit in one place for longer than 1-2 hours. Try to be up at least four hours each day and try to do more activity each day. This will enable you to get your strength back more quickly than if you remain on bed rest. When you become fatigued, rest or nap. At the end of the second week at home, you will be able to drive a car assuming you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication. Activity that involves strain on the abdominal wall, such as lifting, pushing lawn mowers, vacuuming, jumping and running should be avoided for at least six weeks following surgery. Talk to your doctor regarding the need to limit these activities longer depending on your specific circumstances. Do not place anything in your vagina or have intercourse until you are seen by your doctor.

Pain

If there is a significant increase in pain please notify your doctor. You will be given a prescription for a limited amount of pain pills and these should be used for post-operative discomfort. After a few days or so you may find that Tylenol or Ibuprofen will be adequate to control the usual post-operative discomfort and that the pain pills are only needed at bedtime. Because of the risks associated with narcotic use, we want you to try and be off of narcotic pain relievers in one to two weeks. Please keep an eye on your pill quantity and alert us at least 24 hours in advance if you are going to need a refill. Many of these medications require a hand written prescription and cannot be refilled at night or over the weekend.

Work

Returning to work will depend on how you feel and how much rest you need. If you can go a full day without lying down or napping, you may return to work unless there is significant heavy lifting or other strenuous activity in your work. In that case, it is best that you wait until your post op check to determine your physician's recommendations.

Diet

There are no specific dietary requirements. We do recommend that you get plenty of protein and avoid foods that cause gas or constipation. Alcohol should not be taken with pain medication. Smoking will increase coughing, cause more discomfort, and can interfere with healing.

Constipation

This is a very common problem after surgery. It is caused by decreased activity, changes in diet, and use of narcotic pain relievers. Eating plenty of fruit and cutting down on dairy products may help you avoid this problem. A stool softener such as Colace may be purchased over the counter and should be used one to three times daily to avoid hard stools. Milk of Magnesia or a dulcolax suppository should be used if you go more than 4 days without a bowel movement.

Vaginal Discharge

You should expect a vaginal discharge for several weeks after surgery. It will likely be pink or light brown in color and may have a slight odor. The amount will vary depending on your activity but is often more noticeable two weeks after surgery when you begin passing some of the absorbable stitches. If you are flowing like a period or you begin passing clots the size of your thumb or larger, notify your physician. Do not use tampons, douches or feminine deodorant sprays. Showering is fine. Avoid swimming or using a hot tub until seen by your physician.

Hot Sitz Bath

If you have vaginal stitches a hot sitz bath may be soothing. It will increase circulation to the area and help relieve aching and spasms in the bladder and rectum. Sometimes difficulty in voiding can also be overcome by voiding while sitting in warm water. This may be done two or three times per day.

Temperature

If you think you may have a fever or if you have chills, take your temperature. If you have a fever higher than 100.5 degrees orally, **call your physician.**

Catheter

There can be swelling around the urethra after bladder surgery. This can interfere with complete emptying of the bladder. Many people are unable to empty their bladder at the time they are ready for discharge. Do not be alarmed if you go home with your catheter. As the swelling decreases, you will eventually be able to empty your bladder. If you go home with a suprapubic catheter, each time after you urinate, unclamp the catheter and let it drain for about 10 minutes, then re-clamp the catheter and measure the urine in the bag. Please record the amount of urine you void and the amount left in the bladder. When the amount left in the bladder is consistently below 100 cc, you no longer need the catheter. Make an appointment to have the catheter removed.

Post Op Check

If a post op appointment was not made for you before you left the hospital, please call to schedule it. We normally like to see you in two weeks.

For any other problems or concerns please call our office.