

THE FERTILITY CENTER OF OREGON

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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER LAPAROSCOPY

Anesthesia: You may have an unpredictable amount of reaction from the anesthetic ranging from no complaints whatsoever to a feeling of being tired for several days. You may also have a sore throat for the first 24 hours due to the airway placed in your windpipe during the procedure. It is not unusual to experience nausea or vomiting on the day of surgery or even the next day to some degree. You may experience aches in your shoulders or chest due to the carbon dioxide gas placed inside your abdomen. This gas is harmless and will disappear in one to three days. The shoulder and chest discomfort can be relieved by lying flat in bed.

Diet: As soon as you feel like it, you may eat any food or drink that you desire in moderation. It is suggested that no alcohol be consumed for 24 hours following your surgery.

Activity: You should not drive an automobile for 24 hours. Some patients prefer one to two days absence from work; however, you may return to work the next day if you feel up to it. Women will vary as to when they can resume full activity. Some women have put in a full day's work the day after surgery; other women may not be ready to resume normal activities for four to five days. Occasionally, some patients will take longer to recuperate fully, especially if laser or laparoscopic surgery was performed.

Sexual intercourse: You may resume intercourse as soon as you feel like it.

Pain: For the sore throat, use a standard non-prescription anesthetic throat lozenge or gargle. For the shoulder or chest ache, two Tylenol, Advil, or pain pills every four hours usually will control the discomfort. It is important to notify your doctor of any increasing abdominal pain not controlled by Tylenol or Advil.

Abdominal swelling: Fluid is often left inside the abdomen at the end of the laparoscopy in order to "float" the tissues and prevent scar tissue from forming. This fluid will be absorbed by your body within a few days and excreted in the urine. For a few days after your procedure, it is not unusual for your abdomen to be swollen or "bloated" until this fluid is reabsorbed. Also, you may notice clear or slightly bloody fluid coming out the abdominal incisions if you lie on your side or on your stomach. This is normal and will also improve in 2-4 days after your surgery.

Wounds: The stitches are "hidden" beneath the skin and will dissolve with time. Band-Aids should be left on for a few days and changed every day. Small Steri-Strips" on the lower incision can be removed in the shower after one week. The dissolving sutures will sometimes be seen coming out of the incisions. You should not pull on them, and they will just dissolve in a week or two on their own. You may shower, swim, or tub bathe as you like. Do not be afraid to wash the wounds with soap and water; however, do not rub them. Call the office if you have any signs of infection such as pus, marked swelling, or increasing redness.

Menstruation: Generally, there is no change in menstrual pattern. There may be slight vaginal bleeding following the surgery due to the instruments placed in the vagina. If the laparoscopy was done for infertility, you may experience a bluish vaginal discharge or a blue-green color to your urine after tubal dye studies. You may use a tampon or pad as necessary. Call the office if there is any excessive bleeding.

Return appointment: Be sure to make an appointment to see the doctor for a two week post-operative examination to make sure that everything has returned to normal. There is no charge for the post-operative checkup and your doctor can give you a full report on the surgery at that time.