

Post-op Instruction

Hysterectomy and/or bladder repair

Your surgery is over and now comes the recovery. The first few days can be rough but you should continue to improve each day. The recovery time is different for everyone because each body heals in their own way. We have tried to outline some things to watch for but as we can't cover everything please call us with any questions or concerns. There is a doctor available 24-7 to answer your questions.

Phone numbers: Office: 435-792-1920 Doctor on call: 435-716-1000

1. Please call immediately if you have any of the following:

- fever of 101F or higher
- severe abdominal pain
- heavy vaginal bleeding
- nausea and vomiting

2. What to expect

The first few days of your post op will be in the hospital. This may be a trying time for you as you begin your recovery but a good attitude and knowing that things will get better will help. The first 24 hours will depend on your response to anesthesia. If you have nausea the first day it can make your recovery seem forever. Fortunately, this almost always goes away at about 24 hours after surgery. We will also be giving you medications to help but these meds will make you a little groggy. After you are feeling better, you will start changing over to oral pain pills, walking around the unit, increasing your food intake, and, if you've had bladder surgery, working on urinating again. When **you** are ready, you will be discharged. This may be in 1,2 or 3 days depending on how you feel.

After going home you will continue to improve. The pain should decrease pretty quick and you should be needing only a few narcotics by 1 week post op. Your biggest challenge will be the fatigue. You will feel good in the morning but in a few hours will feel like you need a nap. Even after your pain is entirely gone and your are feeling well you may be surprised at the fatigue you still have. Most women feel almost back to normal by 6 weeks but some say that it really took months to feel like they were entirely back to their previous energy level. Remember that your body is working really hard to repair itself and that takes a lot of energy-even if you don't have scars and pain.

You will need to schedule a post operative check 2 and 6 weeks after your surgery.

Bladder Repairs

If you had a bladder repair you may be needing to catheterize yourself for a few days to weeks. Hopefully, you will be able to start emptying some on your own immediately but may still have some residual urine in your bladder. You will be taught to cath before you leave the hospital. You should continue to cath several times a day if your residuals are more than 75cc each time. As things improve you may just need to cath in the mornings or the evenings just to be sure that you are emptying. During this time you are

susceptible to bladder infections and so you will be given an antibiotic to take daily. You can stop this medicine when you stop cathing. Your bladder will also be very irritated and you may notice some extreme urge and possibly some incontinence. This will feel like you suddenly have to go to the bathroom and you may then leak before you have a chance to get to the restroom. Or you may feel like you have to go to the bathroom and you have pain as your bladder contracts. Be assured that this will improve as your bladder heals. If it is painful or severe we can try a medication on a short term basis to keep your bladder from having spasms while it heals.

3. Activity and diet

The first few days you probably won't feel up to doing much. As you feel better you can start walking, shopping, cooking etc. The only caution would be heavy lifting. You should not lift more than 10# for the first two weeks, then less than 20# up to 6 weeks. At that point you will be evaluated for further lifting. If you had a bladder repair you should always be cautious of lifting-like protecting a knee after knee surgery. You should not have intercourse until your 6 week check unless told otherwise. Swimming and aerobic exercise will depend on the surgery you had but you should be able to restart in 4-6 weeks post op. If you are healing very well at your 2 week check you may be able to exercise much earlier.

Eating a well balanced diet will help in your healing. Drink plenty of water as well. It may take you a few days to have your first bowel movement. Eating fiber, drinking prune juice or taking stool softeners may be helpful.

4. Pain control

In the hospital you will be treated with IV and oral pain medications. Please use what you need. It has been shown that you will use more narcotics trying to "catch up" on pain control than if you stay on top of it through the day. If you notice that your nausea worsens after pain meds let us know so we can try a different one.

You should receive a prescription for pain control before going home. Using Ibuprofen (Advil) 800mg every 6 hours, and acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1000mg every 4 hours will also be useful. Be cautious, if your pain medicine is something like Lortab, it already has acetaminophen in it and you may not be able to take more. If your pain is not in control, or if it is worsening, please call us.

5. Bleeding

You should just have a little spotting here and there with activity. All bleeding is coming from your incisions as you don't have a uterus anymore. You should only expect as much bleeding as you would from any other incision on your body.

If your ovaries were left, you will still cycle but without any bleeding. This means that you may have PMS, bloating, ovulation pain etc. Occasionally, the ovaries are "stunned" and you may have some menopausal symptoms like hot flashes for a few weeks until the ovaries start working again.

6. Wound care

If you've had vaginal surgery your sutures will dissolve on their own. You will need to protect your wound by not putting anything in the vagina and other restrictions on your activities as above. If you've had abdominal surgery you will have a wound with staples. These will most likely be removed in the hospital or a few days after you are discharged. You will then have steristrips placed. These can get wet in the shower or tub. They may fall off by themselves which is fine. If they haven't fallen off in 10-14 days you can remove them. Please call if you have any redness or drainage around your wound. Having a little swelling or lump under your wound, or numbness along the edges of the incision can be normal.

Please remember that there is always someone available to answer your questions. We truly hope that this is a good experience for you. Please let us know if there is anything more that we can do to make it better .