

GYNAECOLOGICAL SURGERY PATIENT POST-OPERATIVE INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet is intended to provide you with some general information about what to expect when you go home following common gynaecological procedures.

Dr Mohan will have provided you with information prior to your operation about the procedure itself and some common facts about your condition after operation. If there are any specific concerns that you may have, please discuss these with Dr Mohan.

This pamphlet includes general information that applies to the following gynaecological procedures:

- Laparotomy
- Hysterectomy - laparoscopic or abdominal
- Hysteroscopy D + C + Mirena
- Laparoscopy
- Treatment of Endometriosis

FOLLOWING THE OPERATION

Your length of stay in hospital will vary according to the type of operation you have had. For major abdominal surgery this may be about 5-7 days, and for laparoscopic surgery this may be about 2-5 days.

If the operation is a "day case", you will be able to go home once you have recovered from the anaesthetic, have had something to eat and drink and been able to pass some urine. Because a general anaesthetic can temporarily affect co-ordination and reasoning skills, it is important that you do not **drive, drink alcohol or sign any legal documents** for the first 24 hours post surgery. It is essential that you arrange for somebody to pick you up to drive you home and also be with you to listen to your post operative instructions as you may still be a bit light headed from your anaesthetic.

REST

You should rest when you get home, for the more major operations this should continue for 2-3 weeks, including a rest on your bed during the day as well as staying later in bed in the morning and retiring earlier to bed at night. Resumption of normal daily activities will vary according to the type of surgery, in some cases this may take several weeks.

PAIN

Cramping or abdominal discomfort (similar to a period pain) is quite usual following any gynaecological surgery again varying according to the type of operation, and may occur for a few hours or continue for days. Pain can be treated with paracetamol, panadine or other medication as prescribed by your doctor. A hot pack may ease abdominal discomfort.

VAGINAL BLEEDING

In most cases light vaginal bleeding is to be expected and may continue for up to 3-4 weeks. In order to avoid any risk of infection you should:

- use sanitary pads
- shower as usual

EXERCISE

Exercise should be balanced with adequate rest. You should not lift or pull heavy objects (over 2kgs) for 6-8 weeks following the operation. Bending and squatting are also to be avoided so activities such as loading the washing machine, carrying washing, shopping, children and vacuuming the floor should be delegated to someone else! Walking and swimming are easy forms of exercise but should be introduced gradually. High impact exercise, such as netball, squash and aerobics, should be avoided as it puts undue strain on the healing tissues. If any form of exercise causes you pain please STOP immediately.

INTERCOURSE

Avoid intercourse for 6 weeks, remember everybody is different it may take longer for some. You may need to use a lubricant.

STOCKINGS

The hospital will provide you with Ted stockings: If you are asked, wear these at home and leave them on for 4 weeks. (If you want to take them off occasionally and wash them this is okay). If you are resting or sitting you should have them on.

BLADDER CARE

Following the operation you may have had an indwelling urinary catheter into your bladder. In most cases this will be removed prior to discharge from hospital. If you are going home with a catheter in your bladder you will need specialist advice - please speak to your nurse prior to discharge.

Drink 6-8 cups of fluid every day but avoid excessive caffeine or alcohol. Perform pelvic floor exercises every day once you have recovered from your surgery.

BOWEL CARE

Bowel function usually returns to normal 2-5 days following major surgery. It is important to maintain a good diet high in low residue fibre (pasta, rice, vegetables and fruit) and avoid straining to empty the bowel. The stool should be well formed but soft.

ROUTINE FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT

Please make your Post-Op Review appointment 6 weeks from your surgery date. Dr Mohan will call you with your Pathology results within 1-2 weeks. This may vary as to when they are reported on.

DRIVING

Laparoscopic Surgery - You cannot drive for 4 weeks.

Major Abdominal Surgery - You cannot drive for 6 weeks.

Please check with your insurance company.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP OR FURTHER ADVICE

You should seek advice from your G.P. or gynaecologist if you experience any of the following:

- Persistent vaginal bleeding
- Passing large clots (larger than a 50 cent piece) or tissue
- Offensive vaginal discharge
- A fever - high temperature (over 38°C) or chills
- Increasing abdominal or lower back pain or any pain that is not relieved after taking pain relieving tablets
- Nausea or vomiting that is worsening
- Pain or burning on passing urine, or the need to pass urine frequently or increasing difficulty in emptying the bladder
- If you have a wound
 - persistent redness, pain, pus, or swelling around the incisions or
 - an enlarging bruise around the incision site
- Any other concerns you may have, especially if you feel worse

IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS PLEASE CONTACT

Dr Mohan's Practice on 9388 8141 (Monday - Friday 9am - 4pm) or if out of hours phone your GP or present to King Edward Memorial Hospital (374 Bagot Road, Subiaco) if urgent.