

# Information post-women's surgery: Laparoscopy

Please check that you have the following information or services before you go home (discharged) and that you understand their purpose if required. Ask your nurse or doctor if you are unsure or would like more information.

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When outpatient / local GP appointment is due    | <input type="checkbox"/> Discharge medications                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private X-rays, personal belongings, medications | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Discharge Summary             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel bookings and forms (if applicable)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical certificate                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compliments and Concerns pamphlet                | <input type="checkbox"/> Family notified                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outpatient procedures as required                | <input type="checkbox"/> Contraceptive / Fertility information |

## First 24 hours

After your operation and because of the effects of the anaesthetic, it is important that you:

- Have a responsible adult stay with you for at least your first 24 hours at home.
- Rest quietly at home for 24 hours following discharge and gently ease back into normal activities.
- Do no heavy lifting, housework, cooking or drink alcohol.
- Do not operate machinery or electrical appliances.
- Do not drive a car or sign any important or legal documents.
- Avoid constipation by drinking extra water and adding fibre to your diet.

## Medications

It is normal to have some pain (including cramps) post-surgery. Taking regular analgesia such as paracetamol (Panadol®), every four to six hours will help to keep your pain under control (see manufacturers instructions for recommended dose). A maximum of only eight paracetamol tablets per day is advised. To help with cramps and pain, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Nurofen®) may be useful.

If prescribed stronger analgesia, remember to take regular laxatives as constipation can cause more pain.

As your body heals, this discomfort should decrease and you can gradually reduce the amount of pain medication you are taking. Remember, some discomfort is normal, but pain is a signal to slow down and rest.

## Activity

You should be able to resume your regular activities within a day or two. However, rest is important.

## Sexual activity

Penetrative sex (intercourse) is not recommended until bleeding stops and internal healing has happened (approximately four to six weeks). Additionally, you may need to use a water-based lubricant (e.g. KY Jelly® or Sylk®)

when recommencing sexual activity.

## Vaginal discharge

- Within 24 hours of your operation your bleeding should settle down to be like a menstrual period. You may experience a slight pink or old brown discharge on your sanitary pad or liner for the next five to ten days. Do not use tampons or douche as this may cause infection.
- If you still have periods, expect them within four to six weeks of discharge, unless otherwise advised.
- If your bleeding continues or becomes bright red and/or you develop an offensive discharge you should seek your local doctor's advice or go to your local or Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital emergency department.

## Diet

Avoid constipation by:

- Drinking extra fluids, especially water. This also helps to prevent urinary infections.
- Adding fibre to your diet, e.g. wholemeal bread, fruit and vegetables.
- Exercising gently and moving around more.
- If wind is a problem you may find trying peppermint or chamomile tea useful and using laxatives as necessary, e.g. Coloxyl®.

## Abdominal wounds / pain

- Remove any dressings as soon as they get wet in the shower. They will not need to be reapplied unless the wounds are still oozing. Apply a soft pad or Band-Aid to keep the wound dry and protect your clothing. Once well-healed, you do not need to keep the wound covered.
- After showering, dry the line of the small wounds (some may have stitches) by patting dry with a soft towel. Keep Steri-strips (tape) on until they peel off. The key to complete healing is to keep the areas clean and dry.
- You may experience shoulder tip, neck and back pain for up to a week after the operation. This is due to the gas used during the procedure. This pain can be relieved with Panadol®, hot packs, warm showers and re-positioning your body for comfort.
- Pain should get better each day. If pain continues or worsens, seek medical advice.

## When to seek advice

If you are discharged from Women's Recovery (Level 5 Day Surgery Unit) on the day of your operation a nurse will phone you the next day to check on your progress. If you experience any of the following symptoms that are not relieved by your usual medications or practices you should seek your local doctor's advice, or go either your local or Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital emergency department as soon as possible:

- Sudden shivers or chills, hot flushes or sweating, fever and feeling generally unwell.
- Unusual shortness of breath or chest pain or pain when breathing.
- Severe abdominal pain or cramping lasting longer than 48 hours with pain worsening.
- Heavy or prolonged vaginal bleeding, or large clots (especially if bright red).
- Offensive smelling or unusual coloured vaginal discharge.
- Wound becomes painful, swollen and red and/or has discharge.
- Vomiting develops more than 24 hours after the operation.
- Burning, stinging, excessive frequency or difficulty in passing urine.
- Tenderness and/or swelling or a hot sore area in the calf muscles.

## Follow up appointments

If necessary, your hospital doctor will request and organise a follow-up appointment for you, which will be posted to you four weeks prior to the appointment date, please ensure you phone and confirm this appointment as per instruction in the offer letter.

If you have any concerns, please contact your local doctor or go to either your local of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital emergency department.

**If you would like further information, please contact: 13 HEALTH (13 432 584).**



Partnering with Consumers National Standard 2.4.1

Consumers and/or carers provided feedback on this publication.

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