

Information post-women's surgery:

Vaginal hysterectomy +/- repair surgery (anterior/posterior repair)

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 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"/> Outpatient procedures as requested | <input type="checkbox"/> Family notified |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compliments and Concerns pamphlet | |

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.

Bowel care

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.
- Drinking a glass of pear or prune juice twice a day.
- Exercising gently and moving around more.
- If wind is a problem, you may find trying peppermint or chamomile tea useful.
- Using laxatives as necessary, e.g. Coloxyl®. Depending on what medications you are on, you may have been prescribed two to five days of laxatives to take home.

For more information, ask for a diet sheet or visit www.health.qld.gov.au/eatwellbeactive.

Activity

- Avoid heavy exercise / swimming for at least four weeks after the operation – refer to the physiotherapy discharge pamphlet for post-operative exercises and care.
- Driving is to be avoided for four to six weeks due to medico-legal reasons. Check with your insurance

company regarding this also.

Sexual activity

- Intercourse may be difficult until complete internal healing has occurred (at approximately six weeks).
- Intercourse is not recommended until you are reviewed by your medical team.
- Water-based lubricant and experimenting with other positions may help.

Vaginal discharge

- Vaginal pack is usually removed day 1 post-operatively.
- Slight pink or old brown discharge for up to 3 weeks is normal – do not use tampons, pads only due to increase risk of infection by introducing anything into the vagina.
- After 10-14 days, you may experience a small amount of bright red bleeding, at the same time you may pass a stitch. This is normal and is caused by healing of the internal stitches at the top of the vagina.
- In the event of heavy bright red or offensive smelling discharge, or if you start passing clots from your vagina, you should contact your local doctor or either your local or the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital emergency department as soon as possible.

When to seek advice

- Shivers or chills / fevers.
- Burning, stinging or excessive frequency of urination.
- Offensive smelling or green coloured discharge from the vagina.
- Unusual shortness of breath or chest pain.
- A hot sore area in either of the calf muscles in your lower legs.
- Painful intercourse after 8 weeks.

Follow up appointments

It is important that you have an appointment four to six weeks after your operation with your local doctor to check how you are going and to give you the opportunity to discuss any queries or concerns that you may have. In addition, general reproductive health care may be done if required.

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 to go to either your local or 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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