

## Patient information

# Hysterectomy repair

## Discharge information for patients having had a vaginal surgery

The following advice gives guidance only. Recovery can vary according to your age, health and reason for surgery. Remember we are all individuals.

### Getting home

You will probably have been keen to go home however do not feel surprised if you feel a little tearful once you get there. This can be a normal reaction to the stress of leaving hospital after any operation and travelling home. The following advice gives guidance only as recovery can vary according to your age, health and reason for surgery.

### Resting

For at least the first two weeks you should try to rest as much as you can, go to bed whenever you feel tired. This feeling of tiredness could last for at least two months, so do rest in bed or put your feet up in an arm chair. During this time it is advisable to have someone to stay with you, to cook, do your housework and keep you company. Try not to stand still or sit in the same position for any length of time.

### Exercise and lifting

It might seem contradictory but exercise is as important as rest. You should continue with the exercises the physiotherapist has taught you, walk around, including up and down the stairs. Gradually increase your walking each day. If you like swimming, you can do a gentle swim after about four weeks. Leave strenuous sports until after your check up with your doctor.

Do not lift heavy objects (such as toddlers or shopping) for at least three months. When you do lift remember to bend your knees, keep your back straight and hold the objects close to you.

## **Diet**

Try to eat a variety of foods with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. High fibre foods such as wholemeal bread and brown rice will help prevent constipation. Try to drink plenty of water or non sugary drinks each day. Avoid fatty foods, excessive alcohol, cakes and sweets if you do not want to gain weight. Your surgery does not mean you will get fat, but it is better to control your calorie intake while you are less active than usual.

## **Work**

You are the best judge of when you feel ready to go back to work. Some jobs are more strenuous than others. Some women feel able to return soon after their post operative check up at six weeks. Many women can resume work and normal activities within three months of their operation but recovery rates vary. You may take up to a year to feel completely fit, but a great deal depends on why you have had the operation and the kind of surgery that was performed.

## **Driving - wait until your six week follow up appointment**

You should be able to drive again when you can concentrate fully and do an emergency stop without worrying about your scar. This is usually about four weeks after your operation. Please check with your insurance company regarding cover after surgery.

## **Making love**

It is normal to feel tired or indifferent to sex after a major operation, but things will gradually return to normal. You or your partner may feel anxious about pain after the operation. It is advisable to refrain from full penetration for about four to five weeks, but do not worry if you have gentle intercourse before this time. If you feel any pain, stop what you are doing.

Unless your doctor has advised otherwise, it may be helpful to have attempted full sexual penetration before your six week check up, so you can discuss any problems with your doctor when you go back to the clinic. If your vagina feels dry or tight, apply a lubricant such as K-Y jelly, available from the chemist.

You may start to experience menopausal symptoms if your ovaries were removed. When you go to the clinic for your check up take the opportunity to describe any worrying symptoms like hot flushes. Discuss with your doctor the possibility of having hormone replacement therapy to control these unpleasant symptoms.

## **Feelings**

Many women feel relieved after having gynaecological surgery. You might now feel able to start life afresh now that you are free of the unpleasant and annoying symptoms that you once had.

But other women can feel depressed and lethargic and may need time to get over this. It is therefore important for you both to talk about your feelings concerning your operation and seek and accept help and support from elsewhere if necessary. The hospital nurses, doctors, your own family doctor or local hysterectomy support group may all be able to help you.

## **Remember**

- Tell your family you may not be your usual self for a while after arriving home.
- Rest whenever you are tired.
- Avoid heavy lifting for three months.
- Get some gentle exercise each day.
- Make sure your bladder is empty when you go to the toilet.
- Drink lots of fluids.
- Do not go back to work until you feel ready.
- Tell your doctor if you get any menopausal symptoms
- Talk to your partner about how you feel after the operation.
- Vaginal bleeding usually stops completely after 3 to 6 weeks. Use sanitary towels instead of tampons to avoid any risk of infection.
- You may see stitches on your sanitary towels. These are dissolvable internal sutures and there is no need to be concerned about them.

If you have any questions or worries, please do not hesitate to ring us on F10. We will be pleased to help at any time:

**Telephone: 01284 713226 or 01284 713227**

## **Support Group for Vaginal Hysterectomy:**

Hysterectomy Support Network

c/o Women's Health

52 Featherstone Street

London

EC1Y 8RT

Telephone: 0207 251 6580

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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