



JOHNSON COUNTY OB/GYN, CHARTERED

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ABDOMINAL HYSTERECTOMY DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Incision:

The incision was closed with small staples. They will be removed prior to discharge from the hospital. There are some small strips of tape on the incision – remove these one week from your discharge date. You may wash the incision with soap and water daily. Showers are preferred, as it is sometimes difficult to get in and out of the bathtub in the first week because of your incision. You may use the bathtub whenever you feel comfortable getting in and out. Your incision does not need a dressing unless you so desire. Any signs of infection such as extreme redness or soreness with fever should be reported. It is common to see some redness and some areas of possible drainage or scab formation. Itching is a sign of healing. As the incision heals it may feel hard and lumpy. This is normal. Your abdomen below the navel will feel very swollen. This will disappear in 3-6 weeks.

Pain:

By the time you arrive home, you will still experience pain in the pelvic area. You will also have some pain in the sides of the abdomen up to the navel and some swelling. These are the muscles on the sides of the abdomen, and it takes several weeks before they are back to normal. If you increase your activity and your abdomen becomes more painful, you're doing too much. Try not to do activities to the point that the pain in the pelvic area becomes uncomfortable enough to require pain tablets. Rest and use your heating pad and common sense.

Temperature:

It is normal to have a low-grade temperature after surgery. It is normal to have “night sweats” for several weeks. However, any temperature that is over 100.6° that is persistent should be reported to your doctor.

Diet:

You should maintain a very light diet for 7-10 days. Eat things that are easy to digest and don't cause you gas. Gas pains are fairly common in the first week and it is important to not let your diet contribute to it. Keep a lot of fluids coming in and going out. A mild stool softener such as Colace® or Metamucil® is not bad for 7-10 days. These are over-the-counter medications found at your pharmacy. More difficult cases of gas may require Mylicon® tablets, Dulcolax® tablets, or Milk of Magnesia®. It is best to watch your diet carefully.

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Bleeding:

You may not see any vaginal bleeding after surgery. However, most people see some light spotting. This is usually over in 7-10 days, but it is normal for it to last as long as six weeks. It is normal to see a light yellow discharge. This is healing and the stitches at the back of the vagina bleeding. This, too, can be persistent for several weeks. If you have bleeding that becomes heavy enough to fill a pad in 30 minutes and keeps going over several hours, please call your doctor.

Intercourse:

Please avoid intercourse until checked and cleared by the doctor. There are stitches at the back of the vagina and until they dissolve and the area heals, it can be injured. This healing is usually 4-6 weeks.

Activity:

Upon arriving home, you should spend the first 7-10 days in the house resting more than you are up and about. You may walk up and down stairs as often as you feel like it. You may shower and use the bathtub. Do not lift anything over 10 pounds. Do expect a lot of fatigue. It is also normal to experience some depression the first week or so. The fatigue and depression will disappear as you are able to get out over the next several weeks. The second week at home, you may increase your activity and walk outside or go to the store for a short time. Once again, common sense is the best guide, and if you feel tired, rest. Two weeks after your discharge, you may drive yourself in the car and leave for 1-2 hours. You may do light household chores. Avoid strenuous exercise for six weeks.

Appointment:

Call the office and make an appointment for two weeks after your discharge date. If problems develop, call and be seen sooner. Routine problems can be answered during regular office hours. If an emergency arises, please call the office phone at (913) 236-6455 and the doctor can be reached.

NOTE: If these instructions differ from what you were told, please follow your physician's instructions.