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## HYSTERECTOMY DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

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### **Diet**

- You may have a poor appetite for a while and food may not seem to have its normal taste or appeal. This will resolve shortly.
- Eat a well-balanced diet, including protein, fruits and vegetables, which will help with healing after surgery.
- Drink about 8-10 glasses of fluids a day (especially water) to keep your body well hydrated.
- If you have a tendency towards constipation, increase your fiber intake as well.

### **Activity**

- You may take a bath or shower. Wash the incision with soap and water (the stitches do not have to be removed, as they will dissolve in about 6 weeks). Your dressing can be removed in 23-48 hours and does not need to be replaced.
- You may use lotions and creams on the skin around the incision to relieve itching.
- Increase your activity gradually every day, when you feel capable and aren't in pain. Completely normal activities can be resumed within 4-6 weeks or sooner if the procedure was performed vaginally or through the laparoscope. You may feel tired as you increase your activity, this should improve by 4-6 weeks.
- Drive when you feel capable and are no longer in pain or requiring narcotic pain medications — about 2 weeks after surgery.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects (over 10 pounds) for at least 4 weeks.
- Using stairs is safe.
- Do not douche or put anything into the vagina for 6 weeks.
- You may have intercourse 6 weeks after surgery once you have been seen by your surgeon and the stitches have been checked.
- Resume your exercise routine in 4-6 weeks, depending on how you feel. Ease back into exercise slowly and listen to your body.
- Your doctor can tell you when it's best to go back to work. You can usually go back to work in 3-6 weeks, depending on the procedure and your work situation.

### **Pain**

To control pain after surgery, you will take Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) 600mg every 6 hours and Tylenol 650mg every 6 hours. Alternating these medications will control most of your pain. For pain not controlled with alternating Tylenol and Motrin, your doctor may additionally prescribe Oxycodone 5mg that can be taken every 6 hours.

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If you had a Robotic or laparoscopic hysterectomy, the carbon dioxide gas in the abdomen can form a bubble under the rib cage and cause pain in the chest and right shoulder. Lying down flat and using a heating pad can help this discomfort. Notify our office of any severe abdominal pain not controlled by your pain medicine.

### **Incision Care**

Your incisions are closed with dissolvable stitches. You may shower in 24 hours and change the dressing daily. The dressing may be left off if there is no drainage or bleeding. If your incision was closed with glue, this will peel off in time. Report any signs of infection such as redness, increased pain or drainage.

### **Body Changes**

- You may have a vaginal discharge for up to eight weeks. (At first this may be bloody, but with time should gradually get lighter and thinner.)
- Two weeks after surgery, some women experience an increase in vaginal bleeding for 24 hours. This is normal. However, if it persists or becomes very heavy, call your doctor.
- If both ovaries are removed, you may experience symptoms of menopause, which may include hot flashes, vaginal dryness and night sweats. Hormone replacement therapy may be an option to treat these symptoms and should be discussed with your physician.
- You may feel tired, weaker than usual, or "washed out" for up to six weeks after a major surgery. Try to take naps, or frequent rest breaks, during the day. Simple tasks may initially exhaust you.
- You may feel a sense of loss or become depressed. You may have trouble concentrating or encounter difficulty sleeping.
- All of these feelings and reactions are normal and should go away in a short time. If they persist, please tell your surgeon. At all times, please feel free to contact our office with any questions.

### **Bowels**

- Your bowel takes time to recover from surgery. This should continue once you are home. Your first bowel movement should occur 4-5 days after surgery. You may experience "gas" pain. Drinking hot liquids and walking will help relieve discomfort. You can also use over the counter Simethicone as needed.
- Anesthesia, decreased activity after surgery and pain medications can lead to constipation and pain. We recommend being proactive and taking a gentle daily laxative like Senokot after surgery until your bowels return to normal.

### **Warning signs**

Please call our office if you experience any of the following: uncontrolled pain, fever >100.4, heavy vaginal bleeding, increased redness or drainage from an incision, nausea or vomiting.

### **Return Appointment**

You should have a follow up appointment scheduled within 2-4 weeks. If not, please call our office to schedule.

### **Pathology**

If you have pathology, we generally received it back within a week. Your doctor will either contact you with the results or go over them with you at your post op visit.

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