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LAPAROSCOPIC HYSTERECTOMY DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

INCISIONS:

There are three incisions on your abdomen that are covered with band-aids or a similar dressing. Remove these band-aids when you arrive home. Underneath the band-aids, the incisions may be closed with small steri-strips. Leave these on for one week and then remove them. Do not worry if they fall off sooner than one week. There are small dissolvable stitches underneath the skin that take three to four weeks to dissolve. It is normal for the incisions to be somewhat red or even to see a small amount of discharge. Any fever or extreme redness needs to be reported to your surgeon. As the incisions heal, they will feel hard and lumpy. This is normal and will take six or more weeks to feel soft and normal.

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 your navel. It is also normal to have swelling in the lower abdomen for several weeks. The small incisions are near the muscles in your abdomen, and it takes several weeks before they are back to normal. If you increase your activity and your abdomen becomes more painful, you are doing too much. Try not to do activities to the point that the pain in your pelvic area becomes uncomfortable enough to require pain tablets. Rest and use a heating pad and use common sense on activities.

You will normally be sent home with a narcotic-type pain medication, such as Percocet®, which can be taken every 3-4 hours as needed. This medication should be used sparingly and is usually not required after the first couple of days. A second medication you may receive is Toradol® or Anaprox®, which is taken every 6-8 hours. These types of medications work well for muscle pain and should not be taken with aspirin or ibuprofen. You may instead be advised to take over-the-counter ibuprofen (three to four tablets of Motrin® or Advil® every 6-8 hours) at home as this also works well.

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 above **100.6° F** (or 38.0° C) that is persistent, or any single temperature above **102.0° F** (38.6° C) should be reported to your doctor.

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DIET:

You should maintain a very light diet at home for the first three to four days. Eat things that are easy to digest and don't cause gas. Gas pains are fairly common the first week at home and it is important to not let your diet contribute to it. Drink plenty of fluids and try to empty your bladder frequently. A mild over-the-counter stool softener such as Colace®, Pericolace® or Metamucil® is a good idea for the first week or so. More difficult cases of gas may require Mylicon® tablets (simethicone), Ducolax® tablets (docusate) or suppositories, or Milk of Magnesia®.

BLEEDING:

Most patients see some light bleeding for the first few weeks. This should taper off to light spotting or a light yellow discharge by the third or fourth week. There are stitches at the back of the vagina that are dissolving and allowing the tissue to heal. You may see a small clot or two, but if the bleeding becomes heavy enough to fill a pad in 30 minutes and is persistent, please call your doctor.

INTERCOURSE:

Please avoid sexual intercourse, and do not douche or use tampons until checked and cleared in the office. The stitches in your vagina take about six weeks to completely dissolve and allow full healing of the tissue. It is important that the area is left alone until your six week check.

ACTIVITY:

Upon arriving home, you should rest as much as possible (at least the first 48-72 hours) with minimal distractions. Many patients find themselves sleeping much of this time, and that is acceptable. You may travel up and down stairs as long as there is not extreme discomfort. You may shower and use the bathtub. Do not lift anything more than 10 pounds, or anything you may have to strain to lift.

Do expect a lot of fatigue. It is normal to experience some depression after surgery, especially in the first few weeks. As you heal and are able to increase your activity level, the fatigue and depression will subside. After the first 72 hours you may drive a car as long as there is no significant discomfort. These should be short trips. Do not travel somewhere where your activity may tire you out or impair your ability to return home.

The second week at home, you may increase your activity and walk outside. You may also make longer trips away from home. If you have a job where you can work from home, or go into work for a couple of hours and return home, you may start this type of activity. Once again, use common sense. If you feel tired or increased discomfort, you must rest. No exercise at the gym or at home. Light household chores are acceptable, but carrying loads of wash, vacuuming, cleaning out closets, etc. needs to be avoided.

It is best to stay in town and not travel during the first two weeks at home. After that, short trips are acceptable. Do not plan a major vacation until after the 6-week check-up. You may drive yourself to your 2- week appointment if you are able.

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PATHOLOGY:

A final pathology report on the uterus and ovaries (if they were removed) will be sent to our office by the pathologist at the hospital about 3-4 days after your dismissal. If there is anything in the report that is of concern, you will be contacted at home.

PROBLEMS:

If you have concerns about your recovery, please call our office. You can call the triage nurse at 913-236-6455. She will be able to help you. It is not normal to run a temperature over 101° consistently. It is not normal to have a lot of nausea or vomiting to the point where you can't keep liquids down. It is not normal to have increasing abdomen pain during the first two weeks at home. Call our office if you have any questions at 913-236-1135 for our surgery nurse's assistance.

FOLLOW- UP APPOINTMENTS:

Call the office to schedule an appointment for **TWO WEEKS AFTER YOUR DISCHARGE DATE**. If problems develop, call and be seen sooner. Some routine questions and problems can be answered during our regular office hours, 9-4:30 M-F. If an emergency arises, either call our office or dial 911. After regular hours you may give a message to our answering service and the doctor on-call will call you back.

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