

Guidelines after surgery

Incision care

If your staples were removed in the hospital, you may have small, adhesive “steri strips” over the wound. These strips can be removed in one week if they have not already fallen off on their own. If you do not have your staples removed at the hospital, they will be taken out at the office when you come for your check-up. You should contact the office if you notice increased redness, swelling, pain, drainage or bleeding around the incision as this may indicate a possible infection. Elevated temperature can also indicate infection. You should report any temperature over 100.5 degrees. **You can shower on a daily basis and get the incision wet (no soaking tub baths for at least six weeks) after removing your outer dressing.** Try to keep the skin edges as dry as possible after bathing or showering. Gently pat the incision with a soft towel or use a blow dryer on a low temperature setting to dry the area.

Activity

For the first few days at home, you should continue resting as you have been doing in the hospital. Walking and light activity is important to strengthen muscles and help bowel habits return to normal. After a few days, you may start slowly increasing your activities so that you get back to your previous level of functioning in 3-4 weeks. You may experience good and bad days for several weeks and should rest more if you feel the need to. Driving may be resumed once you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication. Abstain from sexual relations (wait until you have been cleared at your post op visit) or the use of tampons (nothing in the vagina) for 8-10 weeks if you have had a hysterectomy or other vaginal surgery.

Exercise

You may begin gentle stretching and light exercise 7-10 days after you leave the hospital. It is important to start slowly and build back to normal over a period of several weeks. Heavy lifting and vigorous exercise may put too much pressure on your incision and should be avoided for at least 4-6 weeks. In general, “heavy” is anything heavier than a gallon of milk (10 pounds).

Diet

You may resume your regular diet as soon as you return home. Foods that are high in protein promote the healing process. Constipation can be a problem after a major surgery and can be prevented by eating foods such as prunes and bran cereal. It is also important to drink plenty of fluid during recovery from your surgery as this helps prevent constipation as well. You can also try a tea found in most grocery stores called Smooth Move. If a laxative is necessary, Milk of Magnesia, Miralax or a Dulcolax suppository is recommended. Dialose and Colace is a good, non-prescription stool softener and lubricant.

For more information

**Talk with your oncologist
or call: 541-465-3300.**

Gynecologic Oncologists:

Charles K. Anderson, MD

Audrey P. Garrett, MD, MPH

Kathleen Y. Yang, MD

Linn Bergander, PA-C, MPH

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Vaginal discharge

If you have had a hysterectomy you may notice an odorous vaginal discharge, which may be blood tinged or brown and may last up to six weeks after surgery. This discharge may increase two weeks after surgery with the passage of some of the absorbable internal sutures and their knots. This is normal. However, if your discharge becomes bright red, steady, or if you are passing clots the size of your thumbnail or larger, please notify the office. Please avoid tampons, vaginal sprays or douches.

Follow up appointments

The doctor would like to see you two to three weeks after your surgery to look at your incision, go over your pathology and make sure that everything is returning to normal. If you go home with staples in place, you may need to come into the office sooner for staple removal. This will be discussed before you leave the hospital and an appointment can often be made for you at this time. Please call our office with any questions or concerns at 541-465-3300 or 1-888-703-8413 (toll free).

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