



## Going Home After a Hysterectomy

This handout offers the information you need to manage your care when you go home after a hysterectomy.

### If you stayed in hospital after surgery

You will be given a separate handout on the Telehomecare Remote Surgical Monitoring program on the day you leave the hospital. This program allows you to connect to a registered nurse after you go home.

### **After you go home**

- Your surgeon will give you a prescription for pain medication.
- Do not drive for 3 weeks after your surgery.
- Do not drive while you are taking the strong pain medication (morphine or hydromorphone) the surgeon prescribed for you.
- Slowly return to your regular diet. This may take up to 3 weeks. Drink 6 to 8 cups (1 cup = 250ml) of fluids every day.
- You may need to take a stool softener or a laxative if you are not having regular bowel movements (what is normal for you).
- No bathing in a bathtub for 2 weeks. You can have a shower.
- No sex or anything in your vagina for a minimum of 6 weeks. Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe.
- Your surgeon may talk to you about hormone therapy.
- You may go home with a urinary catheter. You will be given the information you need to manage it if this applies to you.

Follow the other instructions below for the type of hysterectomy you had (see the box that has been checked for you by the nurse).

### If you had an abdominal hysterectomy

- If you have staples: See your family doctor or go to a walk-in clinic to have them removed in 10 to 14 days. Take the staple remover given to you to this appointment.
- If you have stitches: These stitches will dissolve on their own. It is normal for this to take up to 6 weeks. The steri-strips covering your stitches may fall off on their own. If they do not fall off after 10 days, remove them when you have a shower.
- Take a leave from work for about 4 to 6 weeks after your surgery (if this applies to you).
- Everyone heals differently. You will slowly be able to do more activities as you feel better.
  - No lifting more than 15 pounds (6.8 kilograms) for 3 weeks.
  - No strenuous exercise (for example: vacuuming, lawn mowing, golfing, swimming, weight lifting) for 3 to 6 weeks. Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe.

If you had a laparoscopic or robotic hysterectomy

- You have stitches that will dissolve on their own. It is normal for this to take up to 6 weeks. The steri-strips covering your stitches may fall off on their own. If they do not fall off after 10 days, remove them when you have a shower.
- Take a leave from work for about 2 to 4 weeks after your surgery (if this applies to you).
- Everyone heals differently. You will be able to do more activities as you feel better.
  - No lifting more than 15 lbs (6.8 kg) for 2 weeks.
  - No strenuous exercise (for example: vacuuming, lawn mowing, golfing, swimming, weight lifting) for 2 to 4 weeks. Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe.

**For questions or concerns**

Call the nurse navigator at 905-576-8711 extension 32917 (between Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4 pm – except on holidays) if you have any of the symptoms below. Go to a walk-in clinic or the emergency department at the hospital closest to you after-hours or on weekends/holidays.

- Increasing amount of bleeding from your vagina
- Increasing amount of pain in your abdomen (belly)
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- No bowel movement or passing of gas for more than 24 hours
- A fever above 38.3° C/100.9°F at any time or above 38.0° C/100.4°F for more than an hour
- Extreme shaking and chills
- Redness or swelling of your incision
- A bad smelling discharge from your incision

Go to the emergency department at the hospital closest to you for any medical emergency.

**Follow up appointment**

- You will be given a follow up appointment to see your surgeon in 3 to 4 weeks. Call the receptionist at your surgeon's office within 1 week after you go home if did not receive this appointment.
- At this appointment, your surgeon will talk to you about your pathology results.
- Go to the Durham Regional Cancer Centre (DRCC) for this appointment. Bring your Ontario Health Card (OHIP) with you to this appointment.

Talk to a member of your healthcare team if you have questions or don't understand any of the information in this handout.

For more information, go to the Cancer Care pages on the Lakeridge Health website at [www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca](http://www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca). Click on Our Services > Diagnosis > Gynecologic Oncology DAP.

Last reviewed: June 2023