



## Going Home After an Abdominal or Laparoscopic Hysterectomy

This handout offers information you need to manage your care after a laparoscopy or laparotomy.

### Instructions for all patients

- Your surgeon will give you a prescription for pain medication
- You will slowly be able to return to your regular diet. This may take up to 3 weeks. Drink 6 to 8 cups (1 cup = 250ml) of fluids every day. Eat foods with bran, whole grains, fruits and vegetables to help prevent constipation.
- Your surgeon may talk to you about hormone therapy
- You may go home with a urinary catheter. Your surgeon will talk to you about this if needed.

**The nurse will check the box for the instructions you need to follow after your surgery.**

### Abdominal hysterectomy

- If you have staples, you will need to see your family doctor or go to a walk in clinic to have them removed in 7 to 10 days. Take the staple remover given to you to this appointment.
- If you have stitches, they 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.
- You need to take time off work for about 4-6 weeks after your surgery.
- Everyone heals differently. You will slowly be able to do more activities as you feel better.
  - No bathing in bathtub for 2 weeks. You can have a shower.
  - No lifting more than 15 pounds (6.8 kilograms) for 3 weeks.
  - No driving for 3 weeks.
  - No strenuous exercise (for example: vacuuming, lawn mowing, golfing, swimming, weight lifting) for 3 to 6 weeks.
  - No sex or anything in your vagina for 6 weeks.

### Laparoscopic 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.
- You need to take time off work for about 2 to 4 weeks after your surgery.
- Everyone heals differently. You will be able to do more activities as you feel better.
  - No bathing in bathtub for 2 weeks. You can have a shower.
  - No lifting more than 15 pounds (6.8 kilograms) for 2 weeks.
  - No driving for 2 weeks.
  - No strenuous exercise (for example: vacuuming, lawn mowing, golfing, swimming, weight lifting) for 2 to 4 weeks.
  - No sex or anything in your vagina for 6 weeks.

## **For questions or concerns**

Call the nurse navigator at your surgeon's office if you have any of the symptoms below.

Call 905-576-8711 extension 32917 (Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4 pm – except on holidays).

After-hours or on weekends/holidays, go to a walk-in clinic or the emergency department at the hospital closest to you.

- 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

## **Your follow up appointment**

- You will be given a follow up appointment to see your surgeon in 2 to 4 weeks. If you are not given this appointment before you leave the hospital, call the receptionist at your surgeon's office within 1 week after you go home.
- At this appointment, your surgeon will talk to you about your pathology results.
- You will go to the Durham Regional Cancer Centre (DRCC) for this appointment
- Bring your DRCC ID card and your Ontario Health Card (OHIP) with you to this appointment.

Please 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: October 2020