

WOMEN'S HEALTH SPECIALISTS

Women's Health Specialists of Montgomery County PA

Gynecology-Gynecologic Oncology
6301 Executive Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: (301) 770-4967

Instructions After Major Surgery

Activity

- Take it easy for the first week after your surgery! Someone should be available to help care for you the first few days.
- You can walk around as much as you like. Do not over do it—no long hikes.
- You can go up and down stairs. Take one step at a time, take your time and plan your day to try to limit the number of times you need to use the stairs.
- Avoid heavy lifting (more than twenty pounds).
- If an activity hurts, you should not be doing it.
- You should be back to fairly normal activity after four weeks.
- You should not do any heavy lifting or vigorous exercise. After six weeks consult the doctor to discuss when you may resume these activities.
- You should not drive your car for two weeks after returning home. You may take short trips if someone else drives.
- After six weeks, you can do anything that is comfortable for you. If an activity still hurts, do not do it.
- Sexual relations may be resumed in 6 weeks (or when advised).
- You can plan to return to work after 4-6 weeks if you do not have to lift, strain or stand for long periods of time.
- It is normal to experience some fatigue as you start to increase your activities. Some days will be better than others. Be patient with yourself. Over the next few weeks you will gradually increase your energy level and return to your normal lifestyle.

Wound Care

- If your skin is closed with staples, they should be removed in the office 7 to 10 days after surgery. If a skin adhesive, called Dermabond, has been applied to close your wound, this will usually dissolve in 2-3 wks and does not need to be removed.
- Shower as usual. The Dermabond may get wet. You may wash your incision gently with mild soap. Do not scrub. No tub baths for 4 weeks.
- Keep the incision area clean and dry.
- You will feel a hard ridge below your incision. This is normal and represents the stitches in the different layers of tissue below the skin. The ridge may be felt for as long as six months.
- Call the office if you notice purulent or foul smelling wound drainage.
- Use sanitary napkins—not tampons—to absorb vaginal blood or drainage. No douching.
- You may have some vaginal bleeding or spotting for 6 weeks.



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INSTRUCTIONS AFTER MAJOR SURGERY

Diet

- You may have regular foods as tolerated. A well-balanced diet promotes healing.
- If you experience indigestion, you should avoid foods containing a lot of fat (dairy products, red meat, and fried or spicy foods) and large or heavy meals.

Pain

- You will have some abdominal pain after your surgery. You will be given a prescription for pain medication before you leave the hospital. The specific instructions will be on the prescription.
- You may use a heating pad to your abdomen to relieve incisional or gas pains.
- It will be more comfortable for you if you splint your incision by pushing a small pillow against it when you cough, sneeze, laugh, or rise from a sitting to standing position.
- **DO NOT DRIVE AFTER TAKING PAIN MEDICATION!!**

Constipation

- Constipation is not unusual after surgery. Your intestines may be slow to wake up for 3-4 days. Pain medication tends to slow your bowels and incisional pain tends to keep you from straining to have a bowel movement--both may contribute to constipation.
- Drink at least 6-8 full glasses of fluids a day.
- Eat a high bulk diet.
- If necessary, take milk of magnesia (two tablespoons). You may repeat the dose in 6 hours.
- Do not take any medication for diarrhea without prior contact with our office.

Notify our office if any of the following occurs:

- Increased pain, redness, drainage or swelling in the surgical area.
- Pain or burning with urination or frequent urge to urinate.
- Vaginal bleeding that soaks more than 1 pad per hour.
- Vaginal discharge that persists longer than 1 month or has a foul odor.
- Fever greater than 100.6
- Nausea, vomiting, or inability to have a bowel movement.
- Headache, muscle aches, dizziness or a general ill feeling.
- Shortness of breath, calf pain, or swelling in your extremities.

Please call the office to schedule your post-operative appointment which needs to be approximately 7-10 days from the day of your procedure.