

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS PELVIC SURGERY

Please follow these instructions to ensure that you recover as fully and quickly as possible.

- **Eating and drinking:** You may continue your regular diet, however, we recommend that you:
  - Eat multiple small meals.
  - Eat foods high in protein such as meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products.
  - Avoid hot, spicy, and fatty foods.
  - Eat fruits with vitamin C (i.e. citrus fruits), vegetables, and high bulk foods (i.e. high in fiber).
  - Drink at least 3 quarts of liquid a day (try to drink more earlier in the day).
  
- **Constipation: Narcotic pain medications such as Percocet and codeine can cause constipation.**  
Try the following to avoid constipation:
  - Eat prunes or other high fiber foods.
  - Metamucil or Citrucel.
  - Milk of Magnesia.
  - Stool softener - look for “Docusate sodium” on the label.
  
- **Activity:** Avoid strenuous physical activity.
  - Do not lift anything greater than 10lbs until approved by your surgeon. This includes heavy housework (i.e. vacuum cleaning).
  - Try to limit going up or down stairs to twice a day for the first week or two.
  - Avoid tub baths for two weeks.
  - Do not drive while on pain medications containing: codeine, hydrocodone, or other narcotics. They may make you drowsy.
  - Avoid putting anything into your vagina (tampons, douching, and sexual intercourse) until your post-operative check.
  - If you exercise regularly, you should not restart until the doctor tells you that it is OK to do so.
  
- **Medication:** You may resume all your usual medications after surgery, unless told otherwise. While you will be sent home with strong pain medications containing small amounts of narcotics, you may also take milder medications, such as Naproyn, Acetaminophen (Tylenol), or Ibuprofen (Motrin) for your pain.
  - At first, take the strong narcotic pain medicines during the day, and use the milder medications to “take the edge off” in between.
  - Take your pain medication when you first begin to feel discomfort. Do not wait until your pain is intense to take your medications.
  - The narcotic pain medications may cause nausea or constipation. As you heal, you may find that you feel better without those medications. If Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (Motrin) relieves the pain, use these medications instead.
  
- **Incision:** Abdominal incision;
  - You may get the incision wet in the shower, but avoid tub baths for two weeks.
  - If the incision appears dirty or caked, you may clean it using hydrogen peroxide or a cotton swab.

- If you have small plastic bandages called “steri-strips” on the incision, they may gradually fall off in the shower. You may trim the curled edges with scissors. They should fall off within one to two weeks, if not, you may gently pull them off.
- **Vaginal Bleeding:** It is normal to experience vaginal spotting and light discharge for up to a month after surgery, whether incision was abdominal or vaginal.
- **Bladder Catheter:** If you are discharged from the hospital with a catheter, you should return to the physician’s office as instructed by your surgeon for catheter removal.
- **Return visit:** You will need to return to see your surgeon two weeks after the date of your surgery. At that time, your incision will be checked and any questions you may have will be answered (i.e. what more you can do physically; such as driving a car, exercise, sexual intercourse).
- **Returning to work:** This depends on the type of surgery you had and how quickly you recover. Your doctor will determine when it’s appropriate for you to return to work.
- **Warning Signs: Call your doctor’s office if you are experience the following:**
  - Temperature over 100°F, or shaking chills.
  - Persistent vomiting.
  - Separation of the incision edges, drainage from the incision, or redness around the incision.
  - Shortness of breath, or chest pain.
  - Vaginal bleeding soaking more than one pad an hour.
  - Severe pain not helped by your prescribed medications.
  - Vaginal discharge with a strong or foul smelling odor.
  - Difficulty urinating or emptying your bladder.
  - Leg or calf pain, swelling, or cramping.