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HYSTERECTOMY POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

A hysterectomy is a surgery to remove your uterus, which can treat problems such as severe pain and bleeding. Recovery time is 4-6 weeks but varies from woman to woman.

At Home

- Don't drive until you are no longer taking opiate pain medications. You can drive when you can slam on the brakes in a car without your abdomen hurting.
- Walking at a slow to moderate pace is encouraged. Take it slow when doing simple housework or when climbing the stairs.
- Deep breathing exercises are encouraged. You can continue to use the incentive spirometer you received in the hospital at home.
- You may need others to help you with chores, cooking, and errands. You may add activities as you feel able, but if you feel overly tired or uncomfortable, you should decrease activity again.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 15 pounds for 6 weeks. This includes heavy housework such as vacuuming, heavy gardening or yardwork, and laundry. No swimming in the pool, hot tub, or lake.
- Avoid constipation:
 - Eat a diet with fiber including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
 - Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day, unless directed otherwise.
 - Over the counter medications (May use both if needed)
 - Docusate sodium (Colace®) 1- 3 times/ day as needed
 - Polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX®) 1 capful 1-2 times/ day as needed
- You may shower. Wash incisions with mild soap and water and pat dry. Do not scrub your incisions. Do not use oils, powders, or lotions on your incision.
- Keep incisions clean and dry; do not cover your incisions with tight clothing. If you have steri-strips, you may remove them when the edges start to peel up (usually 5-7 days). If you have surgical glue on your incisions, you may remove it when the edges start to peel.
- Do not put anything in the vagina until instructed it is ok. No tampons, douching or sex for at least 6 weeks, but may vary depending on healing.
- If you had both ovaries removed, discuss hot flashes, mood swings, and irritability to your doctor at your postop visit. There may be medications that can help you.

When to call your doctor

- Fever above 100.4°F
- Vaginal bleeding that soaks more than 1 pad per hour or large clots (larger than a baseball)
- A smelly discharge from the vagina
- Pain, burning, or trouble with emptying your bladder
- Severe pain in your abdomen that is not improved by pain medications
- Your incision becomes red, warm, and oozes pus. Mild swelling and clear drainage at the incision is normal.
- Shortness of breath, chest pain, or loss of consciousness
- Nausea and vomiting where you can't keep any food/fluids down or is becoming dehydrated

Follow-up

- A typical schedule for postop appointments is at 1 week and 6 weeks after surgery.
- Ask your doctor when you can return to work.