

# After Your Laparoscopic Surgery

## Discharge instructions

*This handout gives instructions to follow at home after your surgery. It includes what activities are safe to do, problems to look out for, and instructions on how to call your care team if you have any problems.*

### Diet

- Drink plenty of fluids. You will know you are drinking enough when your urine is pale yellow.
- Try to eat soft, bland foods for the first few days after surgery. Avoid foods that upset your stomach.
- Eat small, frequent meals during the first week after surgery.

### Activity

- Do not work for the first 1-2 weeks after surgery.
- Do not drive while you are taking any narcotic pain medications.
- You can start doing your normal activities when you feel well enough to do so. You should be doing all your normal activities by 3 to 4 weeks after surgery.
- We recommend that you walk each day after surgery. Walking is healthy and helps you to heal. You can walk up and down stairs.

### Discharge Medications

- Always take your pain medication with food to prevent nausea.
- Pain medications often cause constipation. If you need consistent pain medication after surgery, take a stool softener as well.
- You may take anti-inflammatory medicine, such as ibuprofen. Alternate these with your narcotic pain medication throughout the day for the first 3 to 4 days after surgery. Anti-inflammatory medications work best if you take them regularly, instead of only taking them when you have pain.

### Incision Care

- You can remove the gauze dressing (thin fabric) from your abdominal incisions 24 hours after surgery.

- You may shower 24 hours after surgery, but do **not** sit in any water or take a bath for 2 weeks after surgery. It is okay for your incision area to get wet in the shower. Gently pat this area dry after your shower.
- Remove the steri-strips (small bandages) from your incision 7 to 10 days after surgery, if they have not already fallen off.
- There is a suture (stitch) under your skin that is designed to dissolve as your incision heals. Sometimes, about 2-4 weeks after surgery, this suture comes out of the incision instead of dissolving. You may feel a rough edge or some irritation at your incision sites if the suture is starting to come out. Gently tug to see if it is dissolved under the skin. If it is more than 10 days after surgery, you can trim any visible suture with nail scissors or nail clippers.

## Vaginal Bleeding

It is normal to have some vaginal bleeding after surgery. This bleeding might feel like a menstrual period. This can be caused by changes in your hormones, or from your uterus being handled during surgery.

## When to Call Your Care Team

- Pain that is not helped by medications or rest
- Temperature above 101°F (38°C)
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Heavy vaginal bleeding with blood clots or bright red blood
- Pain and redness or leaking fluid from your incision
- Pain or swelling in your legs
- Pain or burning when you urinate

## How to Contact Your Care Team

Please call right away if you have any questions or concerns about your surgery. We are here to help you.

- Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Gynecology Oncology clinic at 206.598.8300, option 5. The nurses may be helping another patient, but if you leave a message, we will call you back.
- After hours call the hospital answering service at 206.598.6190 and ask for the Gynecology Oncology resident or fellow on call to be paged.
- Send a MyChart message for non-urgent questions or concerns.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Gynecology Oncology Clinic at 206.598.8300, option 5.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Gynecology Oncology resident on call.