

# After Your Wide Local Excision, Vulvectomy, or CO2 Laser Procedure

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

### **Discharge Medications**

- Always take your pain medication with food to prevent nausea.
- You may take anti-inflammatory medications, such as ibuprofen. Alternate these with your narcotic pain medication throughout the day for the first week after surgery. Anti-inflammatory medications work best if you take them regularly, instead of only taking when you have pain.
- Pain medication often causes constipation. If you take narcotic pain medications after surgery, take a stool softener as well. It is best if your bowel movements are soft, but if they are too loose this can increase your risk of infections in the incision (surgery) area. Talk to your care team if you have any questions or concerns about this.

## Incision Care

### Sitz Bath

You take a sitz bath by sitting in warm, shallow water. A sitz bath helps you to soak and clean the genital area. We will give you a tub you can use for sitz baths when you go home from the hospital.

- Use the sitz bath to the incisional area at least 5-6 times a day. Pat the area dry after the sitz bath. You may use a hair dryer on the cool setting to help dry the area. If you had a laser procedure, you may apply the Silvadene cream at this time.
- Use the sitz bath after every bowel movement.

### Your Incision

- After you urinate, use a squirt bottle to rinse the incision area. Then dry the area following the directions above.
- Your stitches should dissolve as the incision area heals. If a stitch comes out or the incision area opens, don't worry. It will still heal, just more slowly. Some spotting (light bleeding) is normal.

### When to Call the Office

- Pain, redness, or swelling that is getting worse
- Discharge or pus
- Bad smell in the incision area
- Continuous bleeding
- Temperature above 101°F (38°C)
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Pain or swelling in your legs

### 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 or on weekends, call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Gynecology Oncology resident on call.
- 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.