

Take home advice following gynaecological surgery

Information for Women

Welcome to the National Women's Gynaecology Service
Tena Koe Noho Ora Mai

Take regular pain relief

Panadol, Ibuprofen (or an alternative anti-inflammatory) and Tramadol are the most common medications prescribed on discharge from hospital. Not everyone will be completely pain-free at discharge, so it is important that these medications are taken regularly for at least two weeks following your discharge from the hospital. We generally recommend taking your anti-inflammatory medication as prescribed with food, and Panadol 3 to 4 times a day for 2 weeks unless advised differently.

Avoid constipation

A diet of fruit (i.e. prunes, kiwifruit), vegetables, fibre, and lots of water will help you maintain a regular bowel routine. If you don't pass a bowel motion for 2 days after discharge from hospital, please get a laxative from your local pharmacy.

Take care of your wound

Keep your wound/wounds clean, and dry well after showering. If your wound becomes red, painful, or starts oozing, you may be developing an infection. Please see your GP.

Laparoscopic wounds - take dressing off 3 days after surgery. If you have steristrips, leave to fall off. See practice nurse to remove stitches 7 days after surgery if they have not dissolved. If there is any oozing from your wound or concerns see your GP.

Laparotomy wounds - leave the honeycomb dressing on until staples are removed 10 days after surgery. If dressing gets wet take it off and keep the wound dry. If there is any oozing from the wound or concerns please see your GP.

Staples are taken out 10 days after surgery. Go to your GP practice nurse to get staples removed. Your hospital nurse will give you a staple remover.

If you are an oncology patient, staples may be taken out at your clinic appointment. You will be advised of the arrangements before discharge. Any other opsite dressings can be removed 3 days after surgery.

Vaginal bleeding (for hysterectomy patients) - you can expect some vaginal bleeding for 1-2 weeks after your operation. This is like a light period and can be red or brown.

Many women have no or little bleeding straight after surgery and have a sudden gush of old blood or fluid approximately 10 days later. This usually stops quickly. Use sanitary towels, not tampons, as tampons increase the risk of infection.

Return to activities

Depending on what procedure you have had, there will be a need to avoid unnecessary physical exertion in order to fully heal. Your surgeon will usually give specific advice but in general, if you have had an open operation with an abdominal scar, it will take six weeks before you can return to full activities. A laparoscopic procedure has a shorter recovery time, usually two weeks. Vaginal hysterectomies and procedures to repair prolapse will need a six week recovery, while tape operations for incontinence are faster, often being ready for normal activity at two weeks. Please ask your hospital doctor for specific advice before you leave hospital.

Information video

An information video “Homeward Bound – Following Gynaecological Surgery” has also been produced which you can find on the National Women’s website at the following link:

<http://nationalwomenshealth.adhb.govt.nz/health-information/information-videos#Homeward>

Problems after discharge

Please contact your family doctor (GP) if you have any concerns. They will contact the hospital if necessary.

Additional Resources

- The Royal Australia & New Zealand College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologist online Patient Information- <https://www.ranzcog.edu.au/womens-health/online-patient-information.html>
- Continence NZ- Healthy Bowel, Pelvic Floor exercise and other information <http://www.continence.org.nz/pages/Continence-Information-Adults/18/>