

Post Operative Guidelines – Open Abdominal Surgery, Laparotomy, Open Hysterectomy

What to expect:

It is normal to have light vaginal bleeding or spotting for up to 6 weeks. A small amount of thin drainage from the incision site is common. Gauze can be worn to protect your clothing.

Avoid heaving lifting of more than 10-15 lbs. or abdominal straining for 6 weeks.

Fatigue is common when you go home. Walking and going up and down stairs is fine, but don't overdo it. No strenuous activity for 4-6 weeks. You should be up and out of bed everyday.

Lack of appetite is common. Try to eat small, frequent meals and drink plenty of uncaffeinated fluids. If you are unable to eat much, a nutrition supplement such as Boost or Ensure may be added. If you are unable to keep any fluids down for a 24 hr period, notify our office.

It is normal for your bowels to take time to return to normal. You may not have a bowel movement for several days. Drink plenty of fluids and take the stool softener as prescribed. Milk of Magnesia may be used if you still have not had a bowel movement and are becoming increasingly uncomfortable.

You may shower normally. Avoid tub baths for 4 weeks. Keep the incision clean and dry.

You may drive when you feel ready and are no longer taking narcotic pain medications. This is usually one to two weeks after discharge.

A prescription for pain medicine will be given to you at discharge. Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) may also be useful for pain control in addition to the narcotic medicine. A heating pad on your abdomen may help with gas pain.

Intercourse, tampons, and douching should be avoided for a minimum of 4 weeks. Be sure to discuss with your provider prior to returning to intercourse.

If you haven't already, contact our office to arrange for staple removal. Your staples should be removed approximately 10-14 days following surgery

Notify our office if you experience any of the following:

Painful swelling, increasing redness, copious or thick drainage from the incision

Fever greater than 100.4

Vaginal bleeding that soaks more than one pad per hour

Persistent nausea or vomiting

Worsening abdominal pain

Calf pain or one sided swelling in your leg

Shortness of breath