

Vaginal Hysterectomy

Patient Information

Women's Health Service

Surname: NHI:

First Names:

Date of Birth: / / Sex:

PLACE PATIENT ID HERE



Going Home

You will usually be able to go home within 24 hours of your surgery. You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home. You should have someone to stay with you for the first 24 hours.

You may feel drowsy because a small amount of the anaesthetic may still remain in your body. This can slow your reaction time, coordination and affect your thinking for the next 24 hours. You should not drink alcohol, make any important decisions, sign any documents (including legal), drive a car, cycle, ride a motorbike or use heavy machinery for at least 24 hours after your operation.

Some side effects following anaesthesia may include; sore/dry throat, or a slight cough. This usually resolves within a few days. Nausea, discomfort and tiredness are common side effects during the first few days following surgery.

Pain relief

Take pain relief as instructed.

Heat-packs may also be helpful.

Activity and Exercise

Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise for 4-6 weeks. You should be able to return to work within 1-2 weeks. You may start driving when you are able to move from side to side, can do an emergency stop without any pain and you are no longer taking any strong pain killers.

It is important for your recovery to do some gentle exercise as early and as often as you feel able, walking is best.

You can start sexual activity again after 2-4 weeks and when the vaginal spotting has stopped.

Bowel Care

Constipation (not being able to poo) can be a problem for some people after an anaesthetic. Include plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and at least 8 glasses of water a day in your diet to keep your bowels moving.

Alpine tea and Kiwicrush may be helpful.

If you have problems with constipation, please check that your discharge medication includes laxatives.

Vaginal Bleeding

You may have some light vaginal bleeding, spotting or brown discharge up to 4-6 weeks after surgery, this is normal as long as it is not unpleasant smelling.

If it is unpleasant smelling, this could be because of an infection and you may need to be treated with antibiotics.

If you have heavy, bright red bleeding and you are filling one sanitary pad every hour, please contact the Women's Health Acute Assessment Unit, or your local Emergency Department.

It is important to use pads instead of tampons and AVOID swimming or hot tub soaks until you have stopped bleeding to avoid infection.

Emotions

If you have had your ovaries removed, you may start to feel symptoms of menopause. These include feeling emotional, flushes, night sweats, dry vagina and itchy skin. These are normal symptoms caused by a drop in your oestrogen hormone levels.

However, every woman is different and you may not have any symptoms. If these symptoms are affecting your daily life, please discuss these with your doctor or nurse.

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Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

If your ovaries have been removed during your operation, you may be offered hormone replacement therapy (HRT). This will be discussed with you by your gynaecologist and together you can decide the best way forward.

Sexuality

You may feel a sense of loss at losing a part of your female identity, this is an understandable emotion. It can be helpful to talk about this with friends or family, your partner or the nurses and doctors.

It takes 2-4 weeks for your body to heal after your operation and it might be some time before you enjoy sex. There are other ways of being close with your partner which you can explore together.

Smears

If you had abnormal smears prior to your hysterectomy, you may need to continue having regular smear tests from the top of the vagina. Please discuss this with your Doctor or Nurse prior to discharge home.

Complications to look out for

We particularly want you to tell us if:

- You have increasing pain not controlled by pain relief.
- You have a fever (temperature).
- You have thick and/or smelly ooze from your wound.
- You have heavy vaginal bleeding or unpleasant smelling discharge.
- You are constipated or unable to pass urine.
- You have on-going nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting.
- You notice one or both of your calf/s has become sore to touch, is red or there is an increase in size of your calf/s

Discharge and Follow-up

Following your operation the doctor will tell you of their findings. Your discharge summary is provided to you and your GP. Please check your discharge summary for details of your follow-up appointment.

At this time your recovery will be assessed and any results will be discussed.

Most women do not have any problems following Vaginal Hysterectomy.

If you have any concerns regarding your post operative recovery, please contact the **Gynaecology Ward/Womens Health Assessment Unit on 04 806 0740 (24 hour coverage).**

Contact number if you have not heard about lab results and if you need a follow up appointment.

**Women's Clinics Reception
Level 3
Wellington Regional Hospital
Phone: 04 806 0760**

Reception will either take a message or forward to the Clinic Nurse for the Specialist whose care you are assigned.