

### Going Home

You will usually be able to go home within 24-48 hours after your operation. You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home. You should have someone stay with you for at least the first 24 hours.

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. Anaesthesia can affect your co-ordination and judgement skills.

### Pain Relief

You will need to take regular pain relief for at least the first week when you are discharged home. Then gradually wean off the regular day time doses and take when needed. Continue the night time doses for longer.

### Exercise and Rest

You will need to take it easy for a few days. You will usually be able to return to work within 4-6 weeks, but this depends on the exact treatment you have and the type of work you do. A full recovery can take 6-8 weeks. It is important for your recovery that you have some gentle exercise each day. More strenuous exercise and daily activities – especially heavy lifting, should be restricted for at least six 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. You will also need to check with your insurance company when you can drive.

### Bowel Care

**It is important that you not become constipated (not being able to poo) after prolapse repair surgery.** A diet high in fruit, vegetables, fibre and water will help you maintain a regular bowel routine. It is also important to try drink eight glasses of water a day to avoid constipation.

Alpine tea and Kiwicrush may be helpful. If you do become constipated you can buy a mild laxative over the counter from your local pharmacy.

### 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.

### Sexuality

Particularly if you have had a hysterectomy as part of your surgery, 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 about 6-8 weeks for your body to heal after your operation and it might be some time before

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you enjoy sex. There are other ways of being close with your partner which you can explore together.

### **Vaginal discharge and bleeding**

After your surgery you **may** have a slight to moderate vaginal discharge. This can last up to a week. Around day 8-10 post-operatively, you **may** experience increasing light bleed or discharge. This is due to the dissolvable stitches coming away and is quite normal but if it becomes offensive smelling or your bleeding is increasing or excessive (i.e. soaking a pad in 10 minutes), we advise you contact the Gynaecology inpatient ward or your own GP.

### **Smears**

If you are still having smears, you will need to continue having regular smear tests. However, if you have had a hysterectomy you will only need to continue having smears if you had abnormal smears prior to your surgery.

### **Long term care**

The operation may not produce a permanent cure, but there are things you can do to prevent further problems: -

- Avoid constipation - maintain a high fibre diet and a good fluid intake, exercise regularly. Laxatives can be purchased at your local pharmacy to help if needed.
- Make sure you see your GP if you develop a cough that will not go away and have this treated.
- Pelvic floor exercises - please ask to see a Physiotherapist if you would like further information.
- Oestrogen therapy (intravaginal Ovestin cream or pessaries) benefit women who have passed menopause.

### **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 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.

If you have any concerns regarding these things or your recovery please contact the **Gynaecology Ward/Womens Health Assessment Unit on 04 8060740 (24 hour coverage)**.

### **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.

Most women do not have any problems following a prolapse repair.

If you have any concerns regarding your post operative recovery please contact the **Gynaecology Ward/Womens Health Assessment Unit on 04 8060740 (24 hour coverage)**.

**Contact number 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.