

_____’s Care Guide after Gynecological Surgery

I came to the hospital on _____ and left on _____

I came to the hospital because _____



How I may feel and what I should do

These symptoms are **normal**

I may feel pain and cramping

- I may have shoulder pain for up to 1 week after surgery.
- I should take my pain medication before my pain gets really bad.
- I should follow the instructions on my medication bottle.
- I should use less narcotic pain medication as my pain gets better. Examples are Percocet, Oxycodone, Tylenol 3, Morphine, or Hydromorphone.
- **I can’t** drive or drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication.
- I should talk to my pharmacist about using Tylenol Extra Strength and Advil.

I may feel constipated

- Pain medication can make it hard for me to have a bowel movement.
- I should drink lots of water, and eat lots of fruits and vegetables.
- **I shouldn’t** strain or push too hard when having a bowel movement.
- I can take a stool softener like Senekot if I haven’t had a bowel movement in 2 days. I should ask my pharmacist for help. I should talk to my family doctor if I feel I need an enema or suppository to help me have a bowel movement.

I may feel tired

- Pain medication can make me feel sleepy. I should rest when I’m tired.

I may not feel hungry

- I should eat smaller meals and snacks more often.
- I should drink 6-10 glasses of water a day to keep my urine clear.

My notes and questions

These symptoms are **not normal**

- I have really bad pain in my stomach area that doesn’t get better when I take pain medication.
- I have really bad nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea that is getting worse.
- I have vaginal discharge that smells different than normal.
- I have heavy bleeding that fills a pad every hour.
- I have pain, redness, or swelling in my lower leg.
- I am passing lots of bright red blood or blood clots.
- My incision looks more red or swollen.
- My incision has yellow or green drainage.
- My temperature is over 38.0°C or I have chills.

I need to **call my surgeon** or go to the nearest **emergency department** if I can’t reach my surgeon.



These symptoms
are an **emergency**



- I have trouble breathing.
- I have chest pain.

I need to **call 911**.

How I should care for my incision

If I have steri-strips (small strips of tape on my incision)

- The steri-strips should fall off on their own in 7-10 days.
- If they haven't fallen off on their own, I can gently remove them in the shower after 10 days.

If I have staples

- My surgeon or family doctor will take out my staples after 10-14 days.

If I have a little bleeding from my incision

- I should clean my incision with warm water in the shower, dry it with a clean towel, and cover it with a Band-Aid.

If I have a Foley catheter

- I will keep my Foley catheter for 1-2 days.
- My nurse will teach me how to look after my catheter.

My medications

- I was given a list of medications I need to take.
- I was told why I need to take my medications.
- I was told about the side effects of my medications.

My appointments

- I was given a list of my appointments.
- Someone reviewed my list with me.
- I was told about the automated phone call.

How my activities will change

Showering

- I can shower 48 hours after my surgery.
- I can let soapy water run over my incision, but **I shouldn't** rub my incision.
- **I can't** have a bath, go swimming, or use a hot tub until I talk to my surgeon.
- **I shouldn't** use any creams on my incision unless I have talked to my surgeon.

Exercise and physical activity

- I should practice deep breathing to keep my lungs healthy.
- I should be active to help me gain strength and feel better.
- I should go for walks often. I should rest and take a break when I need one.
- If I need to take a long car ride, I should stop and walk every 1-2 hours.
- If I had camera surgery, **I can't** lift more than 10 pounds for 2 weeks after my surgery.
- If I had open surgery, **I can't** lift more than 10 pounds for 4-6 weeks after my surgery.

Vaginal bleeding

- I might have spotting for 7-10 days (bleeding that is lighter than a period). I can use a pad until the bleeding stops. **I shouldn't** use a tampon.
- **I can't** put anything in my vagina until I haven't had bleeding for 5 days, or until my surgeon says it's ok.
- I can expect my next period to come in 4-6 weeks. My period might change because of my surgery.

Where I can go for more information

For information about...	I can call or go to...



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