

POST HYSTERECTOMY DISCHARGE WHAT TO EXPECT

- You may have a light blood stained vaginal discharge, which is similar to a light period. This will gradually reduce to nil over the fortnight as your internal wound heals. You should wear panty liners
- You may need to take some simple analgesia for pain/discomfort, especially on waking and settling at night.
- You may feel fatigued
- You may require up to four to six weeks off work.
- After the operation you will no longer be able to have children. Even if you have not yet gone through menopause, you will no longer have periods.
- For the majority of women hysterectomy surgery does not have a negative effect on sexual function.
- For the first two to three weeks lift nothing greater than five kilograms. Increase gently as tolerated over six weeks. You should have returned to strenuous activity by two to three months, depending on the type of surgery, although full recovery may take longer.
- Only when you know you can drive comfortably and, in an emergency breaking situation, act without restriction, should you drive a car. This is usually 7-10 days after laparoscopy, and 3-4 weeks after open abdominal surgery.
- Avoid sexual intercourse for 8 weeks to allow healing of the top of the vagina to take place.
- Avoid inserting anything into the vagina for 8 weeks to allow time for healing to take place (e.g. use sanitary pads and not tampons).

POST-OPERATIVE PROBLEMS

Common Issues:

- Constipation: You should avoid straining hard to pass stool. If you do not open your bowels for more than two-three days you may need to take or increase the use of regular bowel medication such as movicol, coloxyl, or lactulose. Your chemist can advise.
- Shoulder pain may occur secondary to laparoscopic surgery irritating the diaphragm (with pain referred to the shoulder or chest). This should settle by 1-2 days. It is usually eased by simple analgesia (panadol, anti-inflammatory tablets) and mild heat to the area.
- Pain: wound tenderness and discomfort is usual and may last up to 2-3 weeks. You should be able to walk reasonably comfortably with analgesia.
- Wound infections are uncommon. The usual sign of an infection is that the skin around the wound becomes very red and hot or there may be discharge from the wound. Small infections may settle after the discharge is cleaned away and an antiseptic like Betadine is applied twice daily. If you are concerned about the wound please contact us; it is possible antibiotics may be required.

The following signs and symptoms are not part of a normal recovery:

- a fever > 38.5°C or are feeling unwell
- offensive vaginal discharge or heavy bleeding
- wound becomes hot, painful or has offensive fluid draining from it
- nausea and vomiting which does not settle
- unable to empty your bladder or bowel
- severe pain.
- Tenderness or swelling in a leg/calf