

Abdominal Hysterectomy

Discomfort - It is common to have some abdominal pain and cramping. You may take Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) or Tylenol for discomfort unless you have any allergies to these medications. You may use stronger medications if prescribed. You may use a hot water bottle or heating pad on a low setting for 20 minutes each time, 4 to 5 times a day to provide some relief for the discomfort.

Vaginal Bleeding - You may have some vaginal bleeding, spotting or discharge which may be heavy or light for 2 to 4 weeks; this is normal. Do not use tampons or douche. Dissolvable sutures are used in the vaginal repair and will dissolve in time.

Activity - Recovery following surgery will take approximately 6 weeks. For the first week after you go home, it is important to rest as your body heals, but do not spend prolonged periods of time laying flat or sitting, and try not to cross your legs at the knees. Walking is important to your recovery. It is normal to feel tired after minimal activity. Listen to your body and increase your activities gradually as tolerated. It is generally safe to climb **stairs**, but you may find that you may need to limit how often, if you are feeling weak or uncomfortable. You may want someone to assist you the first few times you climb stairs.

Lifting - Do not lift, push or pull anything heavier than 10-15 pounds for 4 - 6 weeks.

Driving - Do not drive for 2-3 weeks. Use your seatbelt. Do not drive if on pain pills.

Work / School - Recovery is usually 6 weeks. Your physician will decide with you on an individual basis when you can return to your job.

Intercourse - Do not have intercourse until after the post-operative visit (6 weeks).

Exercise - More walking as you become more comfortable. Do not resume vigorous exercise until after the 6 week post-operative visit.

Shower - You may bathe or shower as you wish. You do not have to cover the incision. Pat dry the incision afterwards and then keep it clean and dry.

Incision - If steri-strips (tape) are put across the incision, just let them fall off. Take them off if they are still on in 7-10 days. The incision takes 6 months to fully heal and will be sensitive and firm to touch as well as areas of numbness for several months. Avoid sunlight to incision. It burns easily and is sensitive. No tanning salons or self tanners.

Diet - You may resume a regular diet when you are feeling well. You may have constipation over the next few weeks. If you do, eating foods high in fiber (fruit, vegetables, bran) may help. Be sure to drink at least 6 glasses of juice or water a day. If these do not help, you may buy Colace (a stool softener) or Milk of Magnesia (laxatives) at the drug store. Avoid alcohol.

Emotional thoughts - Sadness, "the blues" and sleeping difficulties are common after any surgery. If this continues for more than 2 weeks or gets unbearable, call us! If your ovaries were removed, you may be started on Estrogen for your recovery period. Please discuss this with your surgeon.

Follow-up visit - Call the office the day you go home to see us in 1 week if you have skin sutures / staples, otherwise in 2 weeks and 6 weeks.

Call if you have -

- ❖ Temperature more than 100.5 degrees, or shakes or chills.
- ❖ Abdominal pain that is not relieved by rest or medication, or if the pain increases.
- ❖ Bleeding excessively (soaking a pad every 1 - 2 hours).
- ❖ Foul vaginal discharge.
- ❖ Burning or pain with urination.
- ❖ Leg pain, swelling, redness or tenderness, especially if in one leg and not the other.
- ❖ Swollen tender area of the abdominal incision or a draining area.

It is our hope of the professional staff at *Bedford Women's Care Associates* that your surgical experience has not been unduly stressful and that your recovery will be rapid and uneventful.