After Your Vaginal or Abdominal Hysterectomy

Please return to the clinic in: ☐ 1 week ☐ 2 weeks ☐ 4 weeks ☐ 6 weeks
Make this appointment after you get home if it has not yet been scheduled.

Note: Do not drive a car, drink alcohol or use machinery for the next 24 hours. You should wait until you have recovered before making any important decisions.

Diet

• Eat a well-balanced diet with lots of protein, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Avoid spicy and greasy foods.
• Drink plenty of fluids—at least 8 tall glasses a day. Water is best. Limit caffeine (coffee, tea, cola) to help prevent constipation (hard stools that are difficult to pass).
• If you are constipated, you may take one of these medicines from the drug store: docusate (Colace), docusate with casanthranol (Peri-Colace), psyllium (Metamucil), or milk of magnesia. Follow the directions on the label.

Activity

• Get plenty of rest at first. Slowly return to your normal routine. Several short walks each day would help. It is okay to climb stairs, but use the handrail in case you get dizzy.
• After 2 weeks, you may start gentle exercises. Listen to your body. If you feel tired or have backaches, you may be doing too much too soon.
• Do not drive until you can step on the brakes without pain.
• Do not use tampons, douche or have sex (intercourse) until you see your doctor.
• For the next 6 weeks: Don’t lift or push anything over 15 pounds. Avoid heavy exercise.

Pain control

• Your pain should decrease over the next 2 to 3 weeks. You may feel sore after mild exercise.
• Take your pain medicine as directed by your doctor.

Caring for your incision

• You may see some fluid draining from your incision (wound). Wear a bandage until it stops.
• Keep the area clean and dry. Wash with soap and water. Don’t use lotions or powders.
• If you have:
  – Steri-Strips (small pieces of tape): They may fall off on their own. If not, remove them after 7 days.
  – Staples: We will remove them at your next visit.
  – Dermabond (medical glue): Leave it in place until it wears off.
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Caring for your catheter (bladder tube)
If you have a tube in your bladder, read the instructions on how to care for it.
Take only showers until the tube is removed.

Bathing
Take care to avoid slips and falls. Gently pat your stitches dry after bathing.
☐ After abdominal hysterectomy (surgery through the belly): You may shower. Avoid tub baths and swimming for two weeks, or until your incision heals.
☐ After vaginal hysterectomy (surgery through the vagina): You may bathe or shower. If you had surgery to repair the vaginal wall, it may help to soak in a warm bath for 20 minutes, twice a day. This will speed healing and reduce tenderness.

Normal effects of surgery
• A small amount of blood or fluid coming from your vagina for several weeks. Wear pads as needed.
• Stitches poking out of the vagina. Stitches passing out of the vagina (they will look like tiny threads). Most stitches dissolve within three months.
• Feeling numb around your stitches. This should go away in less than a year.
• Feeling dizzy or light-headed. Hot flashes, trouble sleeping, sudden mood swings and irritability. If a side effect becomes a problem, call your doctor’s office.
• If you had a vaginal repair, you may feel tugging in the vagina. This is a normal part of healing.

Call your doctor if you have:
• Severe chills and a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, taken under the tongue.
• Bright red blood or large clots come out of the vagina—enough to soak one pad in an hour.
• Increase in pain, warmth, swelling, redness or fluid leaking from the surgery site.
• Urine or vaginal fluid that smells bad.
• Trouble urinating (peeing), burning when you go or the need to go more often.
• Calf pain and swelling in one or both legs.
• Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)
• Pain that you cannot control with medicine.

Patient signature __________________________________________ Date __________ Time _______

Provider’s signature ________________________________ Date __________ Time _______

Fairview Health Services
AFTER YOUR VAGINAL OR ABDOMINAL HYSTERECTOMY
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