

Fact sheet: Gynaecological Oncology Unit

Post-operative discharge from hospital after major surgery

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Day of discharge

Before you leave the ward please ensure that you have collected:

- all your belongings from your room, including phone chargers
- any x-rays or scans that you brought into hospital with you
- any medications that you brought into hospital with you
- any new medications prescribed during your stay
- a medical certificate (if you need one)
- your follow-up appointment
- the discharge letter for your local doctor.

Future plans

If you are unsure about the need for further treatment and whether this has been planned for you, please don't hesitate to ask one of the medical or nursing staff.



What to expect in the next few weeks

- Recovery from your operation should take 4 to 6 weeks. You do not have to stay at home and may go out as you wish.
- Vaginal bleeding or spotting can last up to 2 weeks. You should use sanitary pads or panty liners.
- You might be tired for the next 7 to 10 days and this is normal. You should not stay in bed, but get up and get dressed and go out for a short walk once or twice a day, aiming to increase the distance each day.
- If you have been prescribed blood thinning injections, you should continue taking them daily for the recommended duration (usually 28 days).

Emotions

- You might occasionally find that you are tearful and emotional. This is a normal reaction and will gradually lessen.
- If you find this to be an ongoing problem, please let us know as we are able to offer formal psychological support and counselling.

Eating and drinking

- You may resume your normal diet. Your appetite should return to normal over the next few weeks.
- There are no dietary restrictions. You may drink alcohol if you wish.
- For the first few weeks you might find it easier to manage 5 to 6 small meals a day, rather than 3 regular ones.

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Bladder and bowels

- Slight discomfort as you finish passing urine is normal after a hysterectomy. However if you experience burning or stinging when you pass urine you should call us or see your GP.
- It can take several weeks for your bowels to return to normal. It is important to avoid becoming constipated. Ensure that you drink plenty of fluids and that you eat fruit and vegetables every day.
- You might need to take a laxative to relieve constipation. Your doctor or local pharmacist will advise which laxatives are suitable for your situation.

Activity and exercise

- Space your activities throughout the day and gradually increase them as you feel able.
- Your abdominal muscles will take several weeks to heal completely and you should avoid activities that will strain your abdomen during this time:
 - avoid heavy lifting, stretching or strenuous activity (such as heavy housework, carrying bags of shopping, pushing a supermarket trolley) for the next 6 weeks.
 - avoid high impact exercise for 6 weeks. Stop if it is uncomfortable or if it hurts.
- You may drive a car in 4 weeks' time, providing that you are safely able to do an 'emergency stop'. You need to check if your insurance company has any further restrictions.
- If you have had a hysterectomy you should not have sexual intercourse for 6 weeks. If you have not had a hysterectomy you may resume sexual intercourse after vaginal bleeding has stopped (usually about 2 weeks) and you feel comfortable to do so.

Caring for your wound

- You may bath or shower normally. Pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- Don't smoke. Smoking can slow down wound healing and can lead to chest infection after surgery.
- If you have wound staples they should be removed by your GP 7 to 10 days after your operation.

Please see your GP or attend the nearest Emergency Department if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- a temperature of more than 38°C
- a smelly vaginal discharge or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than a period
- your wound becomes hot, red or painful
- burning or stinging when passing urine
- a sudden onset of pain that is not relieved by pain medication
- redness, pain or swelling in one or both legs
- difficulty breathing or feeling faint
- pain in your lungs or chest.

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OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Monday to Friday, 9am - 4pm

Quintina Reyes: 8890-5555; pager 08503

or

Department of Gynaecological Oncology
admin office: 8890-6801

(the doctor will return your call
when they are available)

After hours and weekends-

Ring the hospital switchboard on 8890-5555.
Ask the operator to page the on-call
Gynaecology Registrar or Fellow

or

Attend the Emergency Department of your
nearest hospital.

We welcome further feedback on this brochure
as a way of continually improving our service.

Send your feedback to:
WSLHD-Get_Involved@health.nsw.gov.au