

Patient information factsheet

Recovering well after gynaecological laparoscopic surgery

We have given you this factsheet because you have had gynaecological laparoscopic surgery. It explains what to expect after your surgery and how you can help your body to recover well. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

Common symptoms after gynaecological laparoscopic surgery

Bleeding

You might bleed from your vagina for seven to ten days after having a laparoscopic procedure.

Do not use tampons or menstrual cups during this time, only sanitary towels. Tampons may increase your risk of developing an infection.

Please contact us if you experience heavy bleeding (soaking a pad every one to two hours) or if you pass any clots larger than the size of a 10p coin. You can use the contact details at the end of this factsheet.

It is normal to have vaginal discharge for up to two weeks after the procedure. Please contact your GP if this discharge becomes offensive smelling, as this might be a sign of an infection.

Pain

Due to the gas put into the abdomen (tummy), wind pain is a common problem experienced by women after having a laparoscopic procedure. You can help relieve this wind pain using a heat pack, drinking peppermint tea and keeping moving.

It is also normal to experience some mild abdominal, leg or shoulder-tip pain after your surgery. Please use over-the-counter pain relief, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen-based products. Always read the label or instructions before taking them.

You can take your next dose of pain relief at _____ (time).

When to seek medical advice

Most women recover well after gynaecological laparoscopic surgery. However, as with any operation, there can be complications.

Contact Bramshaw Women's Unit on **023 8120 6035** (up to two weeks after your surgery) or contact your GP or NHS **111** if you experience:

- increasing abdominal (tummy) pain
- a temperature (fever)
- a loss of appetite and vomiting (being sick)
- any difficulty passing urine, a burning or stinging sensation when passing urine or passing urine more often than usual
- a painful, red, swollen, hot leg or difficulty bearing weight on your legs (this may be caused by a deep vein thrombosis (DVT))
- an offensive smelling discharge from the operation site

Before you leave hospital, your nurse will give you a pink card which explains that you have had gynaecological laparoscopic surgery. You must carry this card with you on your person (in your wallet or purse) at all times for two weeks after your surgery. If you become unwell after the procedure, show this card to the healthcare professionals caring for you.

Recovering from your surgery

Stitches and dressings

Your wounds will be closed with either dissolvable stitches or stitches that need to be removed. Before you leave hospital, your nurse will give you information on which type of stitches you have and advice on where to have the stitches removed if needed.

You will have one to four scars on different parts of your abdomen. Each of these will be covered with a dressing. For the first 24 hours after your surgery, please keep your dressings dry.

After 24 hours, you can have a shower. You should avoid having a bath if possible for the first two weeks after your surgery, as this can soften the stitches before your wound is fully healed. The first time you have a shower, it's a good idea to have someone at home with you, in case you feel dizzy or faint. Do not lock the bathroom door.

You can remove the dressings while you are in the bath or shower. Do not worry about getting the scars wet, but make sure you pat them dry with disposable tissues. Do not have the bath or shower too hot, as this can cause your wound to bleed. It is best to use tepid water. Please contact your GP if your scars become hot to the touch, red, swollen or offensive smelling. These can be signs of an infection.

Eating and drinking

You can eat and drink as normal after your surgery.

Sex

You should not have sex for four weeks after your surgery. This is because you are at a higher risk of infection and need to give your body a chance to heal.

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Advice after an anaesthetic and/or sedation

For the first 48 hours after your surgery, you may feel more sleepy than usual and your judgement may be impaired. During this time, you must not:

- drive (your insurance company will have its own conditions for when you are insured to start driving again, so it is important you check your policy)
- drink alcohol
- work
- exercise
- handle machinery (including an oven or hob)
- sign any legal documents

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Bramshaw Women's Unit
Telephone: **023 8120 6035**

Useful links

www.rcog.org.uk

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**