

# Recovery at home after vaginal surgery

## Gynaecology Department Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This booklet is for people who have had vaginal surgery. It aims to answer queries that you may have after your operation.

### What can I do when I get home?

Everybody is different but you may feel tired for the first two weeks after you get home from hospital. However, although you need to rest, lying in bed during the day is not good for you because it increases your risk of developing blood clots, constipation and a chest infection.

You will need to continue to do the exercises you have been shown in hospital by the physiotherapist. If you have been given elastic stockings to help prevent blood clots, you are advised to wear them for three weeks after you get home. You can take them off to wash them, as needed.

Do not stand for too long; do as many things as you can sitting down.

Walking is an excellent exercise for you, so try to take a short walk every day. It is also quite safe for you to go up and down the stairs from your first day home.

## Hygiene

It is a good idea to have daily baths or showers but there is no need to pay any special attention to cleaning the genital area.

After you leave hospital, you may still have some vaginal discharge. If this becomes heavy or starts to look or smell unusual, ask for advice from your GP.

## What about stitches?

The stitches in your vagina will be dissolvable. As they dissolve, you may notice small knots or threads on your underwear or in the bath.

## Lifting

Avoid any heavy lifting (such as shopping bags), stretching or straining for at least six weeks after your operation, as your body needs to heal. After this time, remember to always lift with your knees bent and your back straight.

## Eating and drinking

Eat a diet containing plenty of fibre such as fruit, salads and vegetables to avoid constipation. Drink plenty of fluid – at least two litres in 24 hours, to help prevent urine infections.

## Housework

Have a rest for two weeks and then gradually increase to light household duties. After four to six weeks, you should be back to normal but you should avoid heavy lifting and standing for too long.

## When can I drive?

You should also make sure that you can sit in your car, fasten the seatbelt, press all the pedals and turn your head without any discomfort. You should be able to do an emergency stop.

Do not drive if you have any discomfort that may distract you.

Based on other people's experiences, four weeks is the minimum time required before you are able to drive.

It is very important that you check with your insurance company as to when you can drive again after surgery. Some insurance companies will not allow you to drive for a certain amount of weeks after surgery.

## **When can I go back to work?**

You will probably need at least four to six weeks off work. If you need a sick note, ask the nursing staff before you leave hospital. Depending on the type of work you do, you may need more time off. Your GP will advise you about this.

## **When can I have sex again?**

As you have stitches inside your vagina, it is sensible to wait for four to six weeks or until the discomfort from the operation has gone. After this, start gently.

## **Can I find out more?**

The following web link will give you more information:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/prolapse-of-the-uterus/pages/treatment.aspx>

Leaflets cannot take the place of talks with health professionals. If there is anything you do not understand, or you are worried after your operation, contact:

The ward you were discharged from

or

Gynaecology Outpatient Team on 01384 244584 (8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/obstetrics-and-gynaecology/>

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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