

After Your Gynecological Procedure: What You Need to Know

What to expect after the procedure

If you have sedation medication, you may feel drowsy for the rest of the day.

If you have a general anesthetic:

- You may have an oxygen mask over your nose and mouth when you wake up.
- You may have a sore throat for a few days. This is normal and usually goes away on its own.

If you have a laparoscopy procedure, your abdomen may be bloated for 1-2 days. This is gas left over from the surgery. The gas can cause pain in the upper chest, shoulder, or back. Short walks can help.

What can I do?

- You may not feel like yourself for the first day. Rest in bed until you feel better. **DO NOT** do other activities for the rest of the day.
- If you feel nauseous, try sips of ginger ale and eat some dry crackers. If you feel like eating, try small amounts of foods that are easy to digest, like soups and cereals. Drink lots of fluids for 2-3 days, when you can.

How can I keep myself safe?

- If you go home on the day of surgery:
 - You **MUST** have a responsible person take you home
 - Someone **MUST** stay with you for 24 hours after the surgery.
- For 24 hours after surgery:
 - **DO NOT** drive, operate heavy machinery or make important decisions.
 - **DO NOT** drink alcohol or use recreational substances. The effects will add to those of the surgery medications.

Caring for yourself at home

For **Laparoscopy** procedures:

- **Activity:** Rest after your procedure. Do not do anything that day. Then, increase your activity to normal over the next 7 days.
 - Avoid strenuous activities such as heavy lifting (over 10 pounds), exercise, and housework (vacuuming) for 6 weeks.
- **Hygiene:** Always clean your hands before touching your bandages. If you have square bandages, remove them after 24 hours. Leave surgical tape (steri-strips) on for 7 days.
 - If there is a small amount of bleeding from the incisions, apply a clean bandage on top of the steri-strips.
 - Do not go in a bathtub, hot tub, or swimming pool until your wounds are fully healed.
 - You may shower 24 hours after your surgery. Carefully pat incisions dry after you shower.
 - Any stitches will dissolve in 3-4 weeks.
- **Bleeding:** Light vaginal bleeding is normal after this surgery. Use a pad until the bleeding stops. Do not use tampons. If your incisions are bleeding, apply firm pressure for 10 minutes, or until the bleeding stops.
- **Sexual Activity:** Do not insert anything in your vagina until you speak to your doctor.
- **Bowel Function:** Constipation is common after surgery. You can take **Polyethylene Glycol (PEG)** or Metamucil as needed with lots of water.

For **all other** procedures:

- **Activity:** On the day of the procedure, rest. You can return to your usual activities the next day.
- **Hygiene:** You may shower any time unless your doctor or nurse tells you not to. Do not go in a bathtub, hot tub, or swimming pool until all bleeding has stopped.

- **Bleeding:** Light vaginal bleeding after this procedure is normal. This may last for 1-2 weeks. Use a pad until the bleeding has stopped. Do not insert tampons or menstrual cups.
 - You may also see occasional blood clots and/or tissue pieces. They should be smaller than a toonie coin. A normal period (menstruation) should start within 2-6 weeks.
- **Sexual Activity:** Do not insert anything in your vagina until all bleeding has stopped.

Pain Medication

- For the first 1-2 days, you may have occasional cramping. This can feel like period cramps. To relieve the discomfort, take pain medication. (Follow the instructions below). Use a heating pad as needed.
- Take pain medication if you need it.
- If you have a prescription, follow the instructions from your doctor and pharmacist.
- If you do not have a prescription, you can take:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1000 mg every 6 hours
Next dose at: _____ am/pm

AND / OR

Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin): 400 mg every 6 hours
Next dose at: _____ am/pm

OR

Naproxen 440 to 500 mg every 12 hours
Next dose at: _____ am/pm

NOTE: Naproxen is available without a prescription as 220 mg tablet (take 2 tablets). Prescription Naproxen comes in 500 mg tablets (take 1 tablet).

Do NOT take Naproxen with Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) or Diclofenac (Voltaren).

Gynecologist

Doctor's Sticker Here

Follow-up visit

- Contact your Gynecologist's office to make a follow up appointment and ensure that you keep it. Make sure you go to the appointment. It is important to see your doctor after your procedure.



Contact your Gynecologist or go to Emergency if you:

- Have vaginal bleeding that is increasing, heavy (soaks 1 full pad in 1 hour), or lasts longer than 3-4 weeks.
- Have incisions with bleeding that gets heavier, does not improve with firm steady pressure, or lasts longer than 1 week.
- Have incisions with signs of infection like redness, pus-like (yellow or green) drainage, or swelling.
- Have bad-smelling vaginal discharge.
- Have a fever or chills.
- Have severe pain, and pain medication does not help.
- Have nausea or vomiting for more than 24 hours, and you cannot keep fluids down.
- Cannot pee for 8 hours after you leave the hospital.

DO NOT go to the Urgent Care Centre at BC Women's as it is ONLY for pregnant patients.