



Urogynecology of San Antonio
POST-SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

You have just undergone minimally invasive surgery and now it is your turn to play an important role in the long-term success of your surgical treatment. Surgery and the recovery period can be a difficult time. It is normal to have many questions and concerns. The following guidelines are presented with the goal of helping you recover from surgery and giving you long-lasting satisfaction from your operation.

1.) General suggestions:

a.) When you first come home not every day will be a good day. It is not uncommon after surgery to feel like you are taking two steps forward and one step back. Fatigue and low energy level may persist for many weeks after surgery. Some people experience depression or post-surgery blues. Usually this goes away by itself but if it does not, please call our office and let us know.

b.) Because of your surgery, you may have some spotting and discharge from the vagina for as long as 6 weeks. Bleeding usually lessens over time, but if the bleeding increases, please call the office. Vaginal discharge is usually yellowish-white and watery, representing stitches that are dissolving. This usually goes away by six weeks after surgery. You can use sanitary pads but please do not use tampons.

c.) If you have any problem with your wound, excessive pain, or a fever, please call.

2.) Activity restrictions

It may take up to 6 months to achieve 90% wound strength. Full wound strength may not be achieved until 2 years after surgery! Based on this, we recommend that you limit your activities for a full 6 weeks after surgery. What exactly does this mean? Anything that increases the pressure inside of your abdominal cavity will place stress and strain on the stitches and repair work in your pelvis and vagina. If enough stress is placed, the stitches and repair can break or be torn down. We recommend that you avoid any activity which will unduly increase your intra-abdominal pressure. Specific guidelines are given below.

a) Exercise

Avoid high impact exercise and heavy lifting for 6 weeks. Walking is encouraged starting the day of surgery. It gives you good cardiovascular benefits and helps your body heal.

b) Lifting

Do not lift anything heavier than approximately 10 pounds for the first 6 weeks. A full gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds and can serve as an easy frame of reference. This is a significant limitation since it includes such things as groceries, small children and pets.

c) Sexual Intercourse.

It is important that you refrain from intercourse during the 6-8-week period of initial healing. This activity can disrupt the sutures in the vagina as well as significantly increase intra-abdominal pressure. Please do not put anything in your vagina for the first 6-8 weeks post operatively unless instructed to do so by your provider.

d) Stairs

Stair climbing is acceptable, just take the stairs nice and easy.

e) Driving

Driving is usually permissible 1 week after surgery. It is important to remember that pain from your surgical incisions may cause you to lose your concentration on the road or to have a slower-than-normal response rate when faced with a situation in which you must react quickly. In addition, stepping on the brake quickly may cause your intra- abdominal pressure to rise. Please don't drive if you are taking narcotics for pain control.

f) Bathing

Avoid taking a bath for 2 weeks after your surgery. You may shower like normal starting immediately after your surgery. Please avoid hot tubs, pools, oceans and rivers for 6-8 weeks after surgery.

g) Bathroom Habits

It is important to avoid straining and pushing, whether urinating or having a bowel movement! Therefore, it is very important to avoid constipation. If a high-fiber diet alone is not enough to accomplish this. **Please start the following the day you arrive home and continue for at least 1-2 weeks after surgery.** If you experience diarrhea you may adjust the medication until you form soft stool.

- 1) Colace 1 tablet 2 x a day
- 2) Miralax 1 cap full once a day

3.) Medications

A prescription will be called in **prior** to your surgery. We recommend scheduling ibuprofen and Tylenol for the **first week** after surgery **regardless** of if you have pain or not. Do not take ibuprofen if you have kidney disease or a history of stomach ulcers.

Medications That will be called into your pharmacy:

Tylenol 1000mg (also available over the counter Extra Strength 500mg take 2 tablets)

Ibuprofen 800mg

Gabapentin 300mg (to be taken every 8 hours AS NEEDED)

Oxycodone 5mg (to be taken every 6 hours AS NEEDED for pain)

EXAMPLE:

Tylenol (taken every 8 hours) Taken at 8am

Ibuprofen (taken every 8 hours) Taken at 1200pm

Tylenol taken at 4pm

Ibuprofen taken at 8pm

In addition, you will also be sent a prescription for gabapentin and Oxycodone. You may take either one of these medications as needed for pain if the above regimen does not control your pain. Both medications can have side effects of dizziness, drowsiness and constipation.

4.) Catheter

If you go home with a catheter, you will be asked to come back to the clinic approximately 3-5 days after surgery to take the catheter out and have a voiding trial. A minority of women continue having difficulty emptying their bladder. The options then are to replace the catheter and have you come back in one week or teach you or a family member how to do intermittent self-catheterization.

5.) After hours:

If you need to be seen for a medical emergency, **to include shortness of breath, chest pain, fever, uncontrollable nausea and vomiting** after hours or on the weekend, please go to the emergency room at Methodist Stone Oak Hospital. The ER physician will reach out to us if needed.

Urogynecology Surgery Post Surgical Care Facts/FAQ's

Please read below about expectations and a few recommendations that will answer frequently asked questions from surgery. We hope this will help you understand and manage common experiences that women report after reconstructive pelvic surgery. Not all symptoms can be predicted, nor does each woman have the exact same experience.

What are my limitations after surgery?

We recommend that you do not drive for 1-2 weeks after surgery. You may drive 7 days after surgery if you are not taking any narcotic medications and can make an unintended stop with your foot.

Routine activities such as walking every few hours once you have arrived home is encouraged. To allow adequate wound healing, you should avoid lifting objects in excess of 10 pounds (remember a gallon of milk is 8 pounds!), strenuous physical activities such as gym workouts, running and jumping, and mopping and vacuuming.

Vaginal bleeding

The sutures used for surgery are absorbable, which means that over time they will disappear and are replaced by scar tissue. As this occurs, light vaginal bleeding and spotting are normal and expected. You may have spotting/bleeding up to 90 days from your date of surgery. Please notify clinic if you are experiencing excessive vaginal bleeding that is bleeding through a pad an hour for three consecutive hours.

What constitutes a “fever” after surgery?

An elevated temperature after surgery is considered 101 degrees Fahrenheit that Motrin and Tylenol do not reduce.

Constipation

Constipation is also a common symptom. You can experience post op constipation, even if it wasn't a problem before your surgery. Constipation can also be worsened by use of the narcotic medications that are routinely prescribed to help alleviate your pain. Taking stool softeners as instructed in your pre admission testing packet can help prevent this. However if you continue to struggle with constipation please see below measure to address this.

- Use your narcotic pain medications sparingly and only with moderate to severe pain.

- If you have not had a bowel movement by day 4 after surgery, we recommend taking dose of Milk of Magnesia as directed on the bottle.
- If you feel like you cannot evacuate your rectum or stool is still stuck in your rectum, use Fleets enema suppository.

Swelling after surgery

Vaginal swelling also be a common symptom, especially if you have sutures vaginally, and should improve over the first 1-4 weeks post surgery.

Pain

After surgery, you may experience mild to moderate pain that typically comes and goes. You will be prescribed pain medication which was reviewed at your pre admission testing appointment for surgery. This medication should relieve your pain so that you are comfortable.

Urinary leakage after surgery

Urinary leakage is common after surgery even if you did not leak prior to your surgery. Many factors can contribute to this and should improve with time during post surgical healing. We will reassess your symptoms after 90 days after your surgery. Concerns/questions and treatment options regarding this can be discussed at your post op visit.

What if I have urinary frequency or burning with urination?

Sometimes after surgery you can develop a urinary tract infection. If you believe that you have a UTI, during regular business hours please call the clinic so we can arrange for you to come in to provide a urine sample. If these symptoms develop over the weekend, please go to your local urgent care clinic to be evaluated.

When can I resume sexual intercourse?

No intercourse for eight to ten weeks from date of surgery to ensure proper wound healing.

When should I resume my vaginal estrogen?

Do not put anything in your vagina for at least two weeks after your surgery. All patients should be seen by their physician before they restart their vaginal estrogen.

How soon will I be seen after the surgery?

Depending on your type of surgery you will have a follow up anywhere between 2-4 weeks after your procedure. At this follow up appointment the practitioner will go over your operative report and/or pathology report, as well as answer any questions you may have about your procedure. You may see our Nurse Practitioner or our Physician's Assistant for your post op appointment depending on your Doctor's schedule. Both our NP and PA work very closely with our MD's in order for you to have comprehensive care no matter who you see in our office.

What if I have a concern after hours or on weekends?

If you have concerns after hours or on the weekends and you feel you need immediate medical attention, please proceed to Methodist Stone Oak Hospital Emergency room.

Address: 1139 East Sonterra Blvd

San Antonio, Texas 78258

If you had your procedure done at Methodist Ambulatory Surgical Center please go to Methodist Stone Oak Hospital for treatment.

If after hours or on a weekend and you do not feel you need immediate medical attention, please call the office and leave a message for the staff. Your call will be returned the next business day.