

Patient Information
Going Home after Laparoscopic
Surgery

Gynaecological Unit

One of the main reasons for choosing the laparoscopic or the “key-hole” method of performing your operation is that it should allow you to recover more quickly after your operation. You may go home after only a few days or even hours after your operation but this does not always mean that the operation you have had is only minor. You may well have undergone major surgery and yet still have returned home much more quickly than you would have after conventional surgery.

The risks associated with this type of surgery are small but are important. If you are at home you may not know what to expect after this type of surgery. The staff on the ward should tell you what to anticipate and what to do if you or your family are concerned. Please contact either your GP or the nursing staff who looked after you on the gynaecology ward.

To complement the advice you have been given on the ward this brief list aims to tell you what to expect after your operation and to alert you to signs which might suggest something is wrong.

Pain

You should experience much less pain after laparoscopic surgery than you would expect after a conventional operation. The procedure will not, however, be entirely pain free. At the time of going home you may still be feeling some lower abdominal discomfort and possibly some shoulder tip pain. Such discomfort is likened to a period pain and should be relieved by the medication you have been given by the hospital or by simple remedies such as paracetamol or aspirin. The pain may seem more severe at some times than others but it should progressively improve with time. **Please contact your doctor if the pain gets suddenly or progressively more severe.** Pain after keyhole surgery should never get worse and you should seek help if it does.

Vaginal bleeding

The amount of vaginal bleeding you may expect after laparoscopic surgery varies according to the type of procedure performed. Please ask what to expect following your particular operation. After a hysterectomy and similar operations it is not unusual to have a moderate vaginal loss. This should never be heavier than a period and should get progressively lighter with time. **Please get help if bleeding from your vagina or the abdominal wounds gets unexpectedly heavier or if you have unpleasant vaginal discharge.**

Bladder Function

It is not unusual to experience some difficulties in starting to pass urine after laparoscopic surgery and it may sometimes be uncomfortable to pass urine for a while after surgery. If this does not quickly settle you may have an infection which would benefit from antibiotics. Please contact your doctor for treatment.

Please get help if you develop a fever and urinary problems, particularly if associated with severe pain in the back.

Bowel Function

Most women have some difficulty returning to a normal bowel function after any type of surgery. Constipation and infrequent bowel movements are common after laparoscopic surgery. This should rapidly improve once you return to a normal diet. **Please get help if you develop severe constipation, diarrhoea or colicky pain, particularly if associated with vomiting.**

Fever

A raised temperature is not common after laparoscopic surgery and its cause must always be found. If present it is usually due to minor urinary or wound infections but it may be a sign of more serious problems. **Please get help if you develop a fever after you go home.**

This list is not intended to be a comprehensive catalogue of problems after laparoscopic surgery. We believe you are very unlikely to develop a serious complication after this type of surgery in our unit. However, as you will probably be going home much earlier than patients used to, it is important that you let us know if you are concerned by your progress at home. Often a brief chat will be able to reassure you, but if there is a problem it is always much easier to deal with if treated early. **Please let your doctor or the hospital staff know if you are concerned about your progress.**

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Royal Gwent Hospital, B 7 East ward on:- Tel. No:- 01633 - 238722

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr:- Tel. No:- 01443 802553 (this is manned until 1pm Mon-Fri)

Nevill Hall Hospital, Ward 3/2 on:- Tel. No:- 01873 732410 / 01873 732411