

HENDERSON & WALTON

WOMEN'S CENTER, P.C.

TOTAL ABDOMINAL HYSTERECTOMY

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL:

The staff at Henderson and Walton is committed to ensuring that your post-operative experience is as comfortable as possible. Listed below are some instructions that will help promote healing and enhance your recovery period.

PAIN MANAGEMENT:

When you are discharged from the hospital, you will be given a prescription for pain medication. It is not uncommon for patients having major surgery to need pain medication for several days up to several weeks following their procedure. In an effort to better tolerate your pain medication, please make sure that you have eaten prior to taking. Most patients will find that if they will take aspirin, Tylenol, or drugs similar to ibuprofen or naproxyn on a timed schedule for a few days, they will require much less of the prescribed medication. When taking prescribed pain medications, please take only as directed by your physician. **Should you experience any of the following symptoms after surgery, please notify your physician:**

1. A yellow-green vaginal discharge with persistent odor
2. Temperature greater than 101 degrees
3. Excessive vaginal bleeding (soaking more than one pad per hour)
4. Persistent nausea and vomiting
5. Unusual bleeding and/or discolored drainage from incision site
6. Pain and/or swelling in one or both legs
7. Chest pain or shortness of breath

DIET:

Eat light foods (jello, soups, etc.) as you can tolerate for the first 6-8 hours after the procedure and then advance to your usual diet as tolerated. In the days following your surgery you should try to increase your intake of fluids, especially water and avoid the use of alcohol with prescribed pain medications.

CONSTIPATION:

There should not be a problem with constipation due to surgery or pain medications if you eat a well balanced diet. Here are some things that you can do to help prevent this uncomfortable problem.

1. Include roughage in your diet: fruits and vegetables-especially prunes, lettuce, and celery. Increasing dietary fiber such as bran cereals can also help.
2. Drink water daily.
3. You may use over-the-counter laxatives, milk of magnesia, mineral oil, or stool softeners if needed.

ACTIVITY:

Following your procedure, it is normal to feel tired for a day or two after surgery. To promote healing, it is important to rest during this time. It is also important to walk around several times per day. By doing this, it will help prevent complications such as blood clots, pneumonia, and gas pains. You should be able to climb the stairs and should avoid lifting objects greater than 10 lbs for six (6) weeks following your surgery. Please refrain from any strenuous work or activity during your recovery period. We recommend that you not operate any equipment or drive a car for 2 weeks after surgery or while taking prescribed pain medication. It may require four to six weeks following your surgery before you are completely able to resume all normal activities. Recovery is progressive, and each day you will feel better.

BATHING:

Showering, bathing, and washing your hair are perfectly acceptable. Soaking in a warm bathtub twice a day, 15 minutes each time, the first week you are home will help alleviate discomfort and promote healing. Pay special attention to getting in and out of the shower or bathtub so that you do not fall.

WOUND CARE:

Upon discharge from the hospital, the incision will already have begun to heal. **If you have staples please call the office for an appointment in one week.** The removal of these staples is not a painful procedure. Please clean the incision with soap and water as you bathe daily and that will be all that is required. It is not necessary to keep the incision covered. Please remember that there are sutures at the top of the vagina which will dissolve. As they dissolve 3-4 weeks following your surgery, you may experience light spotting or bleeding. This will resolve completely in 2-3 weeks.

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE:

Avoid intercourse until your physician sees you at your post-operative appointment. Due to the risk of infection and bleeding, you should not douche or place anything into the vagina such as tampons.

RETURN APPOINTMENT:

At the time of your discharge, please call our office and make an appointment with your physician for four weeks after surgery. If you have any problems or questions prior to this appointment, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 930-1800.