

Will I need hormone replacement Therapy (HRT)

No, if you have not had your ovaries removed but most likely if you have had your ovaries removed. Please discuss this with your doctor while in hospital.

Will the ovaries continue to produce eggs?

Yes. If you have not had your ovaries remove. If you have had surgery involving removal of your fallopian tubes you ovaries will still produce eggs that will then eventually be re-absorbed by body.

Will I require any medication when I go home?

On discharge from hospital you may need to take some medication. This will be prescribed and obtained for you from the hospital pharmacy, along obtained for you from the hospital pharmacy, along with any medication that you normally take that you are running out of. The pharmacy normally provides one week supply. If you need any further medication at home you should contact your doctor. A copy of the prescription will be given to you along with your tablets on discharge.

Will I need to visit the hospital again after major abdominal surgery?

You may need to attend the outpatient shachalinaee for a follow-up appointment, depending on your doctor's wishes. This will be discussed prior to discharge. If an appointment is required it will be given to you on the day you go home. It is important that you attend this appointment to discuss your progress and the results of any test. If you are unable to attend your outpatient appointment it is very important that you cancel the appointment and re-arrange another date.



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Patient Guide on Discharge Advice Following Major Abdominal Surgery



This leaflet aims to give you general discharge advice following major abdominal surgery.

What happens when I go home?

When you are ready to go home you should try to arrange for somebody to collect you from hospital and not to attempt to drive or take public transport. The person collecting you should be able to: carry your luggage for you, as you will be unable to lift heavy objects for approximately 6 weeks.

It is advisable to wear loose fitting clothes for your own comfort. It may be beneficial to place a cushion or small pillow between you and the seatbelt to relieve some of the discomfort until you wound heals.

How soon should I return to my normal activities?

It is important when you go home to let your body guide you as to how quickly to resume certain household tasks. Remember everything in moderation, you will feel tired, so rest when you need to. It may take approximately 6-12 weeks before you feel able to carry out tasks as you did before your operation. You are advised not to carry out heavy house work, lifting or driving for at least 6 weeks.

Before resuming driving, consider these points. Can you concentrate for periods without feeling tired? Can you do an emergency stop without discomfort? It is important to progress slowly. Carrying out the exercises the physiotherapist you in hospital will aid your recovery. You will be able to return to work after 6-8 weeks, depending on your operation. If you have any concerns regarding your fitness at this time, speak to your appointment. If you require a sick note, please speak to the nursing staff or ward clerk prior to discharge.

How long can I expect to feel tired?

How you feel emotionally following your operation varies from person to person. You may feel tired for several weeks or even months. Short

periods of depression are normal. Remember, tiredness can cause depression. So do not be alarmed. You may just be overdoing things and need to rest a little more. These symptoms normally pass within 6-8 weeks. If you are concerned speak to your doctor.

When will I be able to have sexual intercourse?

It is advisable to refrain from sexual intercourse for approximately 4-6 weeks. This time will allow your wound to heal fully internally and you may feel some discomfort during this time. You may then resume sexual intercourse when you and your partner feel ready. Depending upon the type of operation you have had, you may feel some vaginal dryness/soreness. Lubricating jelly may help, and is available from chemists and most supermarkets.

Will I gain weight following major abdominal surgery?

You need not gain weight after your operation. At first your appetite may have decreased due to inactivity. Eating sensibly, i.e. a high fibre, low fat diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, accompanied with gentle exercise will help you maintain a healthy weight.

Will I suffer constipation following major abdominal surgery?

Constipation is a potential problem following any kind of abdominal surgery, but is avoidable. Maintaining a high fibre diet and increasing your daily fluid intake to 1.5 - 2 litres (approximately 8 glasses) and gradually increasing exercises will help. If you have had bladder surgery try to avoid caffeine and alcohol as these may irritate the bladder.

When will I be able to exercise again?

With exercise it is important to let your body guide you. If you become tired, take a rest. You are advised to carry out the exercises given to you by the physiotherapist, especially the pelvic floor

exercises, for at least 6 weeks following your operation, although it would be beneficial to carry them out for life. Walking is a good exercise. Try walking for 10 minutes a day until you can achieve normal walking speed without tiring. Gradually increase this as you feel able. Remember, this is only a guideline, let your body be your guide and remember, however far you walk you will have to walk back again. Swimming is a good form of exercise, but it is not advisable until after your 6-week check-up. Competitive or energetic sports should be avoided for 3 months. Ask the physiotherapist for advice prior to discharge.

Will I have a scar?

Unless your operation was performed vaginally you will have a scar. Dependent upon your operation, the surgeon will often perform a cut along your bikini line which will usually fade after a few years. In some cases this may not be possible and a cut will need to be made down the centre of your abdomen. This scar will also normally fade within a few years, yet would be visible if you wore a bikini. You may experience a discharge vaginally for approximately 2 weeks. If it becomes heavier or bright red you should see your doctor for advice. If you have not had a hysterectomy or been through the menopause, your first period may be irregular and heavier than normal. Do not be alarmed, this will resolve itself. It is important to keep your wound clean by taking a bath/shower or having a good wash daily. Try to avoid bubble bath and perfumes near your wound as they may irritate, and avoid talcum powder in the genital area.

Should I continue to have cervical smear tests?

Yes, if you have not had an operation to remove your cervix. If you have had surgery requiring your cervix to be removed you may need to have smears taken from the top of your vagina. If concerned, please ask the nursing staff or doctor prior to discharge.