



COURI CENTER

— for Gynecology and Integrative Women's Health —

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Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about Laparoscopic Hysterectomy

To treat certain problems of the uterus, your doctor may suggest a procedure called a laparoscopic hysterectomy. Laparoscopic surgery, also known as minimally invasive surgery, is done by placing instruments through tiny incisions and visualizing the pelvic contents using a camera attached to a scope rather than utilizing a large abdominal incision. Because laparoscopic surgery is less invasive, there is significantly less post-operative pain and a more rapid recovery.

Is it Normal to Feel So Tired?

Many patients will feel tired after surgery and for several days after. Be sure to get lots of rest and listen to your body. Do not overdo it. Gradually advance your activity.

What Can I do for Nausea/Constipation?

Patients may experience nausea and constipation post-operatively from the pain medication. For nausea, avoid taking medication on an empty stomach. For constipation, make sure to drink plenty of fluids. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. Try a mild fiber laxative such as Milk of Magnesia or Miralax. These can be obtained over-the-counter. As soon as you are able, decrease the amount of pain medication that you are taking. If no relief with these measures, call the office.

How do I Care for my Incisions?

There may be a small amount of bloody fluid coming from the incision site. This is okay. There may also be some black and blue discoloration surrounding the incisions. This is part of the normal healing process. As your incision heals, it will become numb for several weeks. If you notice any redness, swelling, heavy drainage or bleeding from incision site, please call our office.

When Can I Shower?

You may shower the day after surgery. Try to not take a hot shower as this can make you feel lightheaded. It is common to feel somewhat lightheaded after surgery, especially while taking pain medications. Try to keep your shower lukewarm at first and not too long.

When Can I Take a Bath/Swim?

You may take a bath after six weeks. You must also wait six weeks to go into a swimming pool or hot tub. This precaution is to avoid the introduction of any bacteria that could cause an infection.

What Kind of Activity is Allowed?

Stairs - You may climb stairs right away. Just be certain to go slowly and use a handrail as you may still be feeling weak for a few days after surgery.

Housework – ask others to help with chores and errands while you recover for the first few weeks. Don't vacuum or do any heavy pushing/pulling for four to six weeks.

When Can I go back to work?

If you have a sedentary/desk job you may go back to work as early as two weeks after your surgery. If your job involves a lot of walking, lifting or moving about you should allow about four weeks off to completely heal. Please note that every patient is different, and the times stated above can vary from patient to patient.

When Can I Drive?

You may drive when you are no longer taking prescription pain medication and your level of discomfort will allow you to safely operate a motor vehicle.

What Lifting Restrictions do I Have?

Do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds (or a gallon of milk) for four to six weeks.

When Can I Resume My Exercise Program?

Walking – Immediately as tolerated.

Running – Start slowly at a light place after the first one to two weeks.

Light weights – May lift under 10 pounds immediately; heavier weights may be used after four to six weeks. Listen to your body and progress slowly. If an exercise causes pain, decrease weight or wait longer to perform exercise.

Abdominal Exercises – Wait 2-4 weeks. Once again, listen to your body and don't perform any exercises that cause pain.

Yoga – May resume after one to two weeks as tolerated.

When Can I Resume Sexual Intercourse?

You will need to wait for 12 weeks prior to resuming intercourse. You may not place anything (i.e. tampons, douching, sexual intercourse) in the vagina during this time.

If you had a supracervical hysterectomy, i.e. the cervix was not removed, you may have intercourse after your post-operative visit (generally 4-6 weeks after surgery).

Effects of Hysterectomy

Physical – After hysterectomy, you will no longer have periods. If the ovaries are left in place, they continue to produce hormones and you will not enter menopause. Although the ovaries still function, a woman can no longer get pregnant.

If the ovaries are removed before menopause, hormone-related effects will occur. Your body may seem to go through menopause all at once, rather than over a few years as is typical. If you are younger than 45 years and your ovaries were removed, you may be at risk of early osteoporosis. Your doctor can suggest ways to handle menopausal symptoms and prevent osteoporosis.

If you are having a supracervical hysterectomy you will still need to follow routine Pap smear guidelines. Please speak with your gynecologist regarding your particular screening schedule.

Emotional – Many women have an emotional response to the loss of their uterus. This response depends on a number of factors and differs for each woman. Some women feel depressed because they can no longer have children. Other women may feel relieved because the symptoms they were having have now stopped.

Sexual – If the ovaries have been removed at the time of surgery, you may notice vaginal dryness during intercourse. Vaginal lubricants can help to relieve this dryness.