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POST OPERATIVE GUIDELINES

HYSTERECTOMY

Most women stay in hospital for two to five days after a hysterectomy. You will probably feel quite tired and lethargic for the first few days after going home, even though you may have felt fine in hospital. This is quite normal.

For the first two weeks you should just have light activities and no responsibilities, except for your own toilet and hygiene. You should stay at home and not be obliged to perform any task. You should however, get up and dress yourself and stay up for four to six hours. You should have frequent rests during the day. Remember you need psychological as well as physical peace.

Avoid constipation. Use a mild natural laxative as necessary in the first few days.

After the first two weeks you should start to do regular light duties, gradually increasing your time and effort. You may venture from home but you probably should not be driving a car until two to three weeks post operatively. You should have company for your first excursion.

You should be fit to resume normal activities after four to six weeks and you should feel almost 100% better, but certainly do not push yourself too fast at any time.

Over the post-operative weeks there will be some vaginal discharge varying from clear mucous to brownish, to even a little bleeding. If there is heavy bleeding, severe pain or fever, please contact me. The top of the vagina takes about four to six weeks to heal and then after this time sexual intercourse may take place. Because it is newly healed, the tissue may at first be slightly tender but if sexual intercourse is gentle, no harm will occur. In fact, gentle intercourse at this time may make the tissues more supple and therefore less painful. You will still be able to climax. Your partner should not be aware of any difference during intercourse.

If your ovaries have been retained, then they will continue to produce your normal female hormones. Therefore, you will not undergo menopause. The only difference you will note is that you won't have any more periods. If your ovaries are removed at the time of your hysterectomy you will cease to produce oestrogen so you may then get menopausal symptoms. If this occurs, the sex hormone you lack can be replaced by giving you oestrogen or hormone replacement therapy. Your sexuality and sexual feelings are part of you as a woman and are not affected by losing your uterus.

Please feel free to discuss any questions you may have with me and remember, common sense will lead you to a steady recovery.