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Recovery At Home Following Pelvic Surgery - Patient Information

Every individual is unique and the time required for complete recovery may differ from person to person. During the first weeks after surgery you may feel more fatigued than you have expected. Be aware of your body signals. Take the time to relax and allow your body's energy to be directed toward the healing process. The following instructions will assist you in planning your health care during this recovery period and further contribute to the success of your surgery.

Activity/Exercise

Resume your activities by starting slowly. Increase your activities at your own pace without causing strain. You should avoid all activities that require you to place any extra pressure on the incision or on the pelvic organs. That means no heavy lifting, straining, shoving, stooping or reaching to get heavy items until after your follow-up appointment. Your physician may restrict these activities for a longer period of time. If so, please follow his advice. All other activities involve **common sense**. You may go out to visit, to travel, to go to church, or to have visitors as you feel it is appropriate. If you want to return to work, use the same guidelines regarding physical activities as you would at home. The primary thing is to **avoid** activities that will increase pressure in the abdomen or pressure in the pelvis. Should you desire to begin an exercises regimen, try walking. Walking is an excellent form of exercise where distance and pace can be progressively increased. Avoid sexual intercourse until you have seen Dr De Souza for the 6 week postoperative check.

Rest

Rest when you feel fatigued. Loss of stamina is expected for four to eight weeks after any major surgical procedure.

Bathing

Bathing either in a bath or shower is fine. Avoid swimming pools and spas for at least 6 weeks.

Incision Care

Keep your incision clean and dry. All sutures generally used are temporary absorbable sutures and do not need removal but may take up to 6 weeks to dissolve. You may also remove the steri strips that cover your incision after 5 days.

Bleeding

You may experience minimal vaginal bleeding or discharge for 2-4 weeks after surgery, especially after vaginal surgery.

Ted stockings

These are fitted and provided by the hospital - you should wear the stockings for 2 weeks postoperatively.

Gym work

Should not be undertaken until after you have discussed details with Dr De Souza at your postoperative appointment.

Pelvic Floor Exercises

Do not need to be resumed until after your postoperative appointment unless otherwise instructed.

Driving

You should not drive a car until you have ceased all pain medication and feel comfortable about paying attention to the road.

Diet

Eat a well-balanced diet including meats, green and yellow vegetables, fruits and breads. Foods high in protein should be selected in your diet as protein is an essential component for the healing process. For prevention of constipation, try eating whole grain foods, fresh fruits and vegetables and drink adequate amount of fluids.

Suggested Bowel Function

It is important that you avoid straining with bowel movements, unless you are given instructions to the contrary. It is more desirable to use a stool softener, a laxative or a rectal suppository than for you to strain your bowel to work. During the early recovery period (2-4 weeks), you should use a daily fibre supplement* (wholemeal or wholegrain bread; fruit and cereals) and/or a stool softener. This is especially important if you have the tendency to be constipated. * **Metamucil is a fibre supplement which contains the soluble fibre psyllium.**

Bladder Care

Be sure and wipe front to back after voiding. Keep your bladder from being over full by voiding frequently. You will receive individual instructions regarding your bladder program if you are not emptying your bladder on your own.

Signs or Symptoms to Report

If you develop a persistent fever, unusual pain, excessive bleeding, or problems with your wound such as redness or pus, please call our office Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. After hours and on weekends contact Dr. De Souza through the call service 03 93871000. If you develop urinary burning and symptoms of cystitis; arrange a urine test through your GP and ask for a copy to be sent to Dr De Souza.

Postoperative Examination

You will be scheduled for a postoperative follow-up appointment with Dr De Souza at around six weeks. If this is not organised while you are in hospital then contact the rooms to make an appointment when you get home – it is best not to leave it to the last week as there may not be appointments available.

Medications

Unless otherwise directed, resume all of your regular medications. In addition, it is likely you will have other medications to take as directed at home during your recovery period.