What to expect after your Laparoscopic or Vaginal Hysterectomy

**Length of Hospital Stay**
You will usually go home within 3–4 days.

**Post operative pain**
Within a day of laparoscopic hysterectomy most patients require only oral pain medication.

**Mobility**
Showering and walking short distances within 24 hours

**What to expect in hospital**
A urinary catheter (a soft latex tube in the bladder) may be inserted in theatre and left in situ until the following morning for patient comfort (to avoid getting up to the toilet).
An intravenous drip will also be inserted in theatre and be removed within 24–48 hours.
An abdominal drainage tube may also be required (to drain any blood collection) for 24–48 hours.
Anti clotting stockings (thick half length stockings) will be fitted. Please use until fully mobile.

**Return to work**
Patients often return to non-strenuous employment 4 weeks after surgery.
Light duties can be started within 3 weeks.

**Vaginal Bleeding and Discharge**
A small amount of vaginal bleeding is common after this surgery and it may persist for 6 weeks.
Have some ultrathin sanitary pads on hand – do not use tampons.
Please report any discharge that is offensive or becomes heavier than a period.

**Return to normal activity**
- Activities should be limited for 4–6 weeks after surgery (including most housework).
- It is important that you do **not** do any **heavy** work for 6 weeks or heavy lifting for 8 weeks after surgery (this includes vacuuming and sweeping).
- As a general rule, if it hurts do not do it!
- Intercourse should not be resumed until after your post operative appointment.
- It is advisable not to drive a car until completely comfortable and feeling well. This may be anywhere between 2–6 weeks. Do not plan a long trip even as a passenger for at least a couple of weeks after your discharge from hospital.
- Frequent short walks increasing over time is beneficial (i.e. 5 minutes building to 20–30 minutes by 4 weeks post operatively).
- Gentle swimming is fine once all vaginal discharge has settled.
- Avoid constipation – if this is a problem increase your fibre and fluid intake (have at least 1 litre of water per day). Coloxyl tablets may also be useful.
Pelvic floor exercises
These should be recommenced when they can be done comfortably, usually within a week or two of surgery.

Role of hormone replacement therapy
If your ovaries have been removed your oestrogen levels will fall significantly within a few days of surgery. This may cause problems such as hot flushes, sleep disturbances and loss of libido. You may wish to consider hormone therapy. This will be discussed at one of your consultations.

Pap Smears
If you had regular 2 yearly pap smears in the past and they were normal, providing your cervix has been removed, you will no longer require pap smears. It is recommended however, that your GP continue to review you 2 yearly for a pelvic examination and breast check.

Mood swings
It is normal for you to experience “the blues” following a hysterectomy as the operation brings to a close significant symbols of femininity (periods and fertility). Please discuss these important feelings and issues with your family, friends and doctor.