What to expect after prolapse surgery

Hospital Stay

Length of stay
- With a vaginal or laparoscopic prolapse repair surgery you will usually go home within 2–4 days of surgery.

Post operative pain
- Within a day of your vaginal or laparoscopic operation, most patients require only oral pain medications and are usually up and walking around.

Urinary Catheter
- A soft latex tube (catheter) may be required to drain the bladder for 24–36 hours to allow it to rest after surgery.
- After incontinence surgery a small number of women may have ongoing difficulty emptying their bladder and thus require a catheter for a longer period of time.
- In these cases you can go home with a urinary drainage bag and return a week or 2 later to have the catheter removed.
- Alternatively you may be taught to insert a small catheter to empty your bladder on a regular basis until your bladder function returns to normal.

Vaginal bleeding
- A small amount of vaginal bleeding is common after vaginal surgery and it may persist for up to 6 weeks. It can sometimes be associated with an unusual odour.
- Have some ultrathin sanitary pads on hand – do not use tampons
For the first two weeks following discharge from hospital

- Restrict your activity – no washing, ironing, vacuuming, changing bed linen etc
- Rest as much as possible – have an afternoon lie down for 1 – 2 hours
- Very short, frequent walks around the house
- Do not lift anything heavier than 2-3kgs
- You may have a sudden, moderate vaginal loss around eight to ten days, which should then stop
- Please tell your doctor about any vaginal discharge that is offensive, becomes heavier than a period, or is associated with a fever and feeling unwell.

For the next two to four weeks (weeks 4–6 of your recovery)

- It is important that you do not do any heavy work or lift more than 4-5kgs including shopping bags, washing baskets and children!
- Frequent short walks increasing over time is beneficial (i.e. 5–10 minutes building to 20–30 minutes)
- Avoid playing sport, gym work and impact exercises such as jogging and jumping
- You may notice some stitch fragments on your pad – this is normal
- You may return to non-strenuous employment within 4–6 weeks of surgery.

General Advice

- As a general rule, if it hurts do not do it!
- Take regular pain relief until discomfort/pain has resolved – codeine based pain relief can cause constipation so best to be avoided.
- Intercourse should not be resumed until eight weeks after surgery (assuming all bleeding and discharge has settled) or following 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.
- Gentle swimming is fine once all vaginal discharge has settled
- **Prevent constipation** – Avoid straining when opening your bowels. If this is a problem increase your fibre and fluid intake (have at least 1-1½ litres of water per day). Coloxyl tablets (1–2 tablets once or twice a day) may also be useful.
- **Pelvic floor exercises** may be commenced when they can be done comfortably. Remember to contract your pelvic floor muscles with any exertion (i.e coughing, sneezing, laughing etc).