

# Information post-women's surgery: Laparoscopic ectopic surgery

Please check that you have the following information or services before you go home (discharged) and that you understand their purpose. Ask your nurse or doctor if you are unsure or would like more information.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When outpatient / local GP appointment is due    | <input type="checkbox"/> Discharge medications  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private X-rays, personal belongings, medications | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Discharge Summary                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel bookings and forms (if applicable)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical certificate  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compliments and Concerns pamphlet                | <input type="checkbox"/> Family notified  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outpatient procedures as requested               | <input type="checkbox"/> Grief and Loss booklet                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contacts:  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Anti-D</i> ® (anti-Rh (D) gamma globulin) (if applicable) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Health Case Manager                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Contraceptive / Fertility information                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Where and when to seek advice                    |   |

## First 24 hours

After your operation and because of the effects of the anaesthetic, it is important that you:

- Have a responsible adult stay with you for at least your first 24 hours at home.
- Rest quietly at home for 24 hours following discharge and gently ease back into normal activities, do no heavy lifting, housework or cooking.
- Do not drink alcohol or operate machinery or electrical appliances.
- Do not drive a car or sign any important or legal documents.
- Avoid constipation by drinking extra water and adding fibre to your diet.

## Medications / Pain

It is normal to have some pain (including cramps) post-surgery. Taking regular analgesia (e.g. paracetamol) every four to six hours will help to keep your pain under control (see manufacturer's instructions for recommended dose). A maximum of only eight Panadol® tablets per day is advised. To help with cramps and pain, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Nurofen®) may be useful.

If you have a Rhesus negative blood group, prior to going home you be given an injection of anti-Rh (D) gamma globulin (*Anti-D*®). This is given to prevent an immune response developing in future pregnancies that can cause severe anaemia in babies and other complications.

It is important to use some form of contraception for the first three months after you operation to give your body time to heal. You will need to start this immediately if on hormonal contraception (e.g. the pill, depo) or as soon as possible. Barrier methods (e.g. condoms, diaphragm) can be used when you recommence intercourse. For more information, speak to your doctor, nurse or Family Planning Queensland ([www.fpq.com.au](http://www.fpq.com.au)).

## Activity

You should be able to resume your regular activities within a day or two. However, rest is important.

## Sexual activity

Penetrative sex (intercourse) is not recommended until bleeding stops (about two weeks) and internal healing has happened (approximately four to six weeks). Additionally you may need to use a water-based lubricant (e.g. KY Jelly® or Sylk®) when recommencing sexual activity.

## Vaginal discharge

- Within 24 hours of your operation your bleeding should settle to be like a menstrual period. You may experience a slight pink or brown discharge on your sanitary pad or liner for the next five to ten days.
- Do not use tampons or douche as this may increase the risk of infection.
- If you still have periods, expect them within four to six weeks of discharge, unless otherwise advised.
- If your bleeding continues or becomes bright red and/or discharge becomes offensive on smell you should seek your local doctor's advice or go to your local hospital emergency department.

## Abdominal wounds / pain

- After showering, dry the line of the small wounds (some may have stitches) by patting dry with a soft towel. The key to complete healing of the keyhole wounds is to keep the areas clean and dry. Report if your wound becomes painful, swollen and red and/or has a discharge.
- You may experience shoulder tip, neck and back pain for up to a week after the operation. This is due to the gas used during the procedure. This pain can be relieved with hot packs, warm showers and re-positioning your body for comfort. Pain should get better each day. If not, seek medical advice.

## When to seek advice

If you experience any of the following symptoms that are not relieved by your usual medications or practices, you should seek your local doctor's advice, or go to either your local or the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital emergency department as soon as possible:

- Sudden shivers or chills, hot flushes or sweating, fever and feeling generally unwell.
- Unusual shortness of breath or chest pain or pain when breathing.
- Severe abdominal pain or cramping lasting longer than 48 hours, with worsening pain.
- Heavy or prolonged vaginal bleeding, or large clots (especially if bright red).
- Offensive smelling or unusual coloured vaginal discharge.
- If you continue to have any pregnancy symptoms after one week.
- Burning, stinging, excessive frequency or difficulty in passing urine.
- Tenderness and/or swelling or a hot sore area in the calf muscles.

## Follow up appointments

It is important that you have an appointment about four to six weeks after your operation with your local doctor to check how you are going and to give you an opportunity to discuss any queries or concerns you may have. In addition, general reproductive health care (e.g. contraceptive plans, Pap smear) may be done if required.

If necessary, your hospital doctor will request and organise a follow-up appointment for you, which will be posted to you four weeks prior to the appointment date, please ensure you phone and confirm this appointment as per instruction in the offer letter.

In some situations, follow-up blood (BHCG) tests are required. You will be told whether you need these tests or not.

**If you would like further information, please contact: 13 HEALTH (13 432 584).**



Partnering with Consumers National Standard 2.4.1

Consumers and/or carers provided feedback on this publication.

CPN: 1612