

## **Caring for Yourself after Vaginal Prolapse Repair**

**General Care:** You will be sore and it will take time to heal after surgery; naturally, you will gradually get better and need less pain medication on a daily basis.

**Diet:** Start with easy, bland foods and resume your regular diet as tolerated. Avoid foods that are greasy or give you gas. Keep well hydrated, drinking at least 8 glasses of fluids per day. Do not drink any alcohol while taking narcotic pain medications.

**Activity:** You should take short walks frequently after surgery, but no strenuous activity. You may climb stairs, slowly and carefully. In addition to the surgical reconstruction you just underwent, what you don't do is as important as what you do in the success of your repair. We recommend no heavy housework for the first 6-8 weeks. No lifting greater than 10 pounds for at least 6 weeks, although the more heavy lifting you do in general can compromise our repair. You may drive, generally, in about 1-2 weeks. **Do not drive while taking narcotic medication.** Also, do not drive until you are moving (standing, sitting, walking) easily without pain or hesitation. You may use your stairs at home after discharge, increasing as the days go on. This is all designed with the theory of reducing the amount of abdominal straining which can lead to a longer lasting surgical correction. **Listen to your body: if you are receiving signals that you are doing too much (pain, pulling, bleeding) then STOP doing it!**

**Wound Care:** You may shower after your surgery. Your incisions are in the vagina. You may also have sutures between the rectum and vagina. These sutures will dissolve on their own. You may use ice packs on and off (no more than 20 minutes at a time) for the first 72 hours. You will have some vaginal bleeding tapering off to spotting for up to several weeks. If it becomes heavier than you would expect please give us a call.

**Other Limitations:** Do not put anything in the vagina (do not have sex, douche, or use tampons) until cleared by your doctor. Do not soak in a bath, pool, hot tub, or the ocean for at least 2 weeks or until your doctor says it is okay.

**When to Call Your doctor:** If you develop a fever greater than 101°, chills, nausea, vomiting, problems urinating, increasing abdominal pain, or concerns with your incisions, call your doctor. If you experience heavy vaginal bleeding or large blood clots, call your doctor; light spotting and discharge after surgery is normal and is a sign of healing, even 3-4 weeks after surgery. If the discharge is particularly foul smelling, please call the office. If you have swelling, redness or pain in your legs, call your doctor. If you have trouble breathing, chest pain, or any other emergency, go to your nearest Emergency Room and/or call 911. If, at any time, you have questions or concerns, you should feel free to call your doctor.

**Pain Control:** Continue narcotic pain medications as prescribed by your doctor as needed. Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) should be the main medication you use for pain control unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. Take ibuprofen with food, and do not take more than is recommended or prescribed. Please use caution if taking extra acetaminophen (Tylenol) as most narcotic medications already contain this, and taking too much is dangerous. Please call our office or talk to your pharmacist if you have any questions.

**Bowel Regimen:** You may not have a bowel movement for several days post operatively. Please keep bowel movements soft by adding extra fiber to your diet and drinking plenty of fluids. In addition, please supplement your diet with:

Colace (100mg) – One tablet 2 times per day (other stool softener is acceptable)  
Miralax powder (laxative) – One tablespoon dissolved in 8 ounces of water or juice every day

If you are unable to have a bowel movement by the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> day after your operation, please try some Milk of Magnesium, or alternatively you may call the office. Once bowel movements are regular and easy, you may gradually wean yourself off of the laxatives and stool softeners.

**Follow-up Appointment:** Please call the office for an appointment to see your doctor approximately 4 weeks after your surgery. Please call the office sooner if you have any questions or concerns.

**Catheter Care (if applicable):** If you have difficulty voiding after the surgery or if your doctor feels it is best, you may be sent home with a catheter. If so, rest assured that this is a short-term problem. You will be given a leg bag and a large overnight bag on discharge and the appropriate education to care for both catheters. You may shower with the catheter in place. Please call the office to schedule a time to come in with the next few days to have the catheter removed.