

Preparing for your Gynecologic Surgery

Your Surgery: _____

Your Surgeons: Dr. Mona Mazgani, Dr. Trevor Cohen, Dr. Shaina (Joohyun) Lee

Surgery Location: Victoria General Hospital (1 Hospital Way, Victoria, BC V8Z 6R5)

Before Surgery

- You recover faster from surgery if you are in the best possible condition before your surgery.
 - **Exercise:** Do some gentle exercise 15-30 minutes a day during the weeks leading up to your surgery.
 - **Smoking cessation:** People who stop smoking before surgery may have fewer complications after surgery.
 - **Alcohol:** Alcohol can interfere with medications given during or after surgery. Do not drink any alcohol for at least 48 hours before the surgery.
 - Call our office if you feel sick or need to cancel your surgery for any reason.
- Before you have your surgery, think about what you will need when you go home. If possible, get things ready ahead of time:
 - You may need help with meals, laundry, or bathing. Try to arrange for family or friends, or community care services (such as Home and Community Care) to help you.
 - Consider preparing and freezing meals.
 - Think about where you will go after you leave the hospital. Who will drive you home from the hospital and who will stay with you?
- **Medications**
 - Stop taking all herbal supplements and vitamin E for seven days before your surgery.
 - You may see an anesthesiologist or internal medicine doctor before your surgery. Your surgeon will arrange this.
 - Follow instructions from the anesthesiologist or internal medicine doctor about when to stop your medications for high blood pressure, diabetes, epilepsy, or other medical conditions.
 - If you take blood thinners (for example: clopidogrel, apixaban, or others), follow instructions from the anesthesiologist or internal medicine doctor about when to stop this medication. Call us if you need clarification.

Preparing for your Gynecologic Surgery

The day before your surgery

- Double check what time you need to get to the hospital for your surgery.
- **Antibacterial sponge wash:** You can buy this sponge wash at any pharmacy. Do the wash the night before and the morning of your surgery (please see separate handout for instructions).
- Stop eating **solid foods at midnight.**
- You may drink **clear fluids** until 3 hours before your surgery. This helps you stay hydrated and keeps your blood sugar normal during surgery.
 - Clear fluids include water, apple or cranberry juice, popsicles.
 - Do not drink any dairy products or protein drinks.

• What to bring to the hospital on the day of surgery

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government issued ID or Care card • Emergency contact information • Comfortable clothing • Hearing aids, glasses, dentures • Shoes or slippers with non-slip soles • All your medications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar-free chewing gum (for recovery – explained below) • Toothbrush and toothpaste • Mobility aid, a cane or walker • Your CPAP, if you use one
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After Surgery

- After your surgery, we want to control your pain, prevent complications, increase your activity, and return you to your normal diet. Most people stay in the hospital for 1-3 days, depending on the type of procedure.
- **Activity:**
 - The sooner you get up and move around, the better it is for your recovery.
 - Change your position in bed at least every 2 hours.
 - **Do leg exercises every hour** while you are awake and in bed.
 - Move your feet around in circles, 5 times in each direction.
 - Bend your foot up and down 5 times.
 - Bend your knees by sliding your heel up and down on the bed, 5 times.
 - We strongly encourage you to sit up and walk as soon as possible after surgery. The nurses will help you up the first time and at other times if needed.
 - Walk around the hallway at least 5-10 times per day while in hospital.

Preparing for your Gynecologic Surgery

- **Breathing Exercises:**

- Deep breathing and coughing can help to clear mucus from your lungs and prevent pneumonia (a lung infection).
- **Do breathing exercises every hour** while you are awake:
 - Take a deep breath in through your nose. Hold the breath for a count of 3, then breathe out slowly through your mouth. Repeat 5 times.
 - Your nurse will give you an incentive spirometer to strengthen your lungs. Ask the nurse how to use this.
- **Do this coughing exercise** after breathing exercises:
 - Gently hug a pillow into your surgical site to protect the area. Take a quick deep breath in, then cough. Repeat 2 times.

- **Bladder and Bowel Function:**

- Help your bowels return to normal:
 - **Chew gum for 15 minutes every 2-3 hours** while awake.
 - Drink fluids.
 - Walk around the hospital.
 - **Tell your nurse** when you have a bowel movement.
- You may have a urinary catheter placed during your surgery.
 - The catheter will be removed before you go home. Your nurse in the hospital will walk you through this process.
 - **Once the catheter is removed, tell your nurse if you are unable to urinate.**
 - You may have to go home with the urinary catheter in place. We may arrange for Home Care Nursing support to help with this.

- **Pain Management:**

- You will want to manage your pain to stay comfortable, so you will be able to do your normal activities such as sitting and walking.
- Your nurse will give you **extra strength (1000mg) acetaminophen (Tylenol)** every 6-12 hours for pain control, unless you have known allergies or other problems.
- Talk to your nurse if you need other pain medications.

When You Go Home from the Hospital

- Continue with light activities for 6 weeks after surgery. Do not lift anything over 10 pounds or do intense exercise during this time.

Preparing for your Gynecologic Surgery

- You may be given **blood thinner pills** to take after your surgery. Please take these as prescribed to prevent blood clots.
- **After hysterectomy:** Do not put anything in your vagina for 6 weeks (no baths, intercourse, dilators, or douching).
- **Wound care**
 - Your nurse will remove your bandage before you go home. Keep the wound open to the air. If the staples catch on your clothing, you may place a clean, light bandage over top.
 - You can shower 2 days after your surgery. Keep the incision dry after showering by patting it with a clean towel.
 - Do not apply creams, lotions, or ointments to the incision, unless directed to do so by your surgeon.
 - **Vulvar surgery:**
 - See handout for wound care.

Follow Up with your Care Team

- If your wound is closed with staples, make an appointment with your family doctor to have them removed **7-10 days after your surgery**. If you do not have a family doctor, please let your surgeon know.
- Your surgeon will call you with the final pathology results about 3-4 weeks after the surgery. If you do not hear from us by 4 weeks, please call our office.
- We will see you for a post-operative assessment in 6-8 weeks. You **do not** need to make this appointment. You will get a letter in the mail after your surgery with appointment details.
- **Go to the nearest emergency department if you have:**
 - Fever (above 38.0°C or 100.4°F).
 - Severe vomiting and you are unable to keep fluids down.
 - Pain you cannot manage with oral medication.
 - Heavy bleeding (soaking more than 1 sanitary pad per hour for 2 consecutive hours).
- Please call our nurse line if you have questions about your surgery or recovery. We will be happy to see you earlier if needed.

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Notes:

Contact information

BC Cancer - Victoria
2410 Lee Avenue
Victoria, BC

BC Cancer Gynecology Secretary Team	Grace: 250.519.5578 Barbara: 250.519.5571
BC Cancer Gynecology Nurses	250.519.5488