

Recovery after an overnight stay for major gynaecological surgery

Gynaecology Services

Information for Patients

Produced: November 2024

Review: November 2027

Leaflet number: 1560 Version: 1

This leaflet will tell you what you can and can't expect to do after you go home following major surgery.

Work

You should be able to return to work after a few weeks. It will depend on the type of surgery you have had. It will also depend on how strenuous your work is. For

- **keyhole surgery** after 2 to 4 weeks,
- **vaginal surgery** after 4 to 6 weeks,
- **major open surgery** 6 to 12 weeks.

If your job is a very physical job, or you drive a lot your recovery may be longer than the timescales suggested above.

Driving

You should not drive until you are confident that you can drive safely. It will usually be around the time that you have returned to most of your usual activities. It is important that any pain has improved enough for you to safely do an emergency stop and turn the wheel quickly. Please check with your insurer. They may have specific instructions.

Hobbies and activities

You should think about taking up your hobbies and activities as soon as possible after your surgery. It will help with your recovery. You do not need to limit these activities unless they cause a lot of pain or involve heavy lifting. If this is the case avoid them for the first 6 weeks.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Diet

A balanced, varied diet is recommended. Try eating 3 or more times a day. If you are finding it difficult to eat, try smaller meals or snacks for the first few days. Calories and protein are important to help your body heal and bowels to work properly.

Washing

You can have a shower the day after your operation. Because you have had an anaesthetic, you might feel dizzy. Please have an adult around to help you. If needed, leave the door unlocked. We recommend that you should avoid having a bath, if possible, for the first 6 weeks after your surgery. This will let the wound heal fully.

Exercise

We encourage walking from the day after your operation. You should plan to take short walks a few times a day. Slowly increase this during the 4 weeks after your operation until you are back to your normal level of activity. Common sense will guide your exercise and rehabilitation. If the wound is still uncomfortable, slow down your exercise.

Having sex

You should not have sex for 6 weeks after surgery particularly if you have had vaginal surgery or a hysterectomy. When you are having sex for the first time after your operation you may be anxious. Using a lubricant gel may make sex more comfortable.

Tummy wounds

Your wounds will often be slightly red and uncomfortable during the first 1 to 2 weeks. Itching around the wound is also normal. Please tell your GP (or call the ward) if your wounds become hot, painful, swollen or starts to leak fluid. Do not to use scented toiletries around your wound for about 4 weeks or once it has healed.

Vaginal discharge

If you have your operation through your vagina or a hysterectomy it is quite normal to have a vaginal discharge for 4 to 6 weeks after your operation. It will vary in colour from red to brown.

You must not use a tampon during this time.

If it is smelly or itchy, you should see your GP for a swab to check for infections.

Your bowels

Your bowel function may change after surgery with runny poo or hard poo. Making sure you eat often, drink plenty of fluids (water, hot drinks or juices) and walking around will help. If you cannot poo for more than 3 days we advise that you take a laxative to avoid straining. If you are also being sick this could be a sign of bowel blockage. You must call the ward for advice. If your poos are very

runny (and smelly) especially if you have more pain or fever, you could have a bowel infection. You will need to take a poo sample to your GP. You can contact the ward for advice.

Pain

When you first go home, you should take your pain killers regularly. You will be doing a lot more activity than when you were in hospital. You should be able to reduce the number of pain tablets over the first 2 weeks after your operation.

Preventing blood clots

As you will not be moving around as much as usual, you are at risk of blood clots in the veins for a few weeks after the surgery. We recommend that you wear your elastic stockings for a 2 to 6 weeks after discharge home or until you are back to your normal activity levels.

If you have been discharged with blood thinning injections, we advise that you wear your stockings for up to 4 weeks. If your surgery was for cancer, you will need to wear them for longer.

You may remove your stockings each day to shower. Check the skin on your legs and wash the stockings. The stockings should keep their shape for up to 40 washes.

Contact details

Leicester General Hospital - Gwendolen Road, Leicester, LE5 4PW

- **Ward 31** (open every day, 24 hours per day): 0116 258 4843

Leicester Royal Infirmary - Infirmary Square, Leicester LE1 5WW

- **Gynaecology Assessment Unit (GAU)** (open every day, 24 hour a day): 0116 2586259

NHS Direct: 111

Activity guide after your major operation

The table is a guide only. You can talk to your nurse, doctor, or GP if you have specific concerns.

Activity / week	1	2	3	4	5+6	7+8	9+10	11+
Full kettle	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Light dusting	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Making a snack	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Cooking	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Light washing & ironing	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Heavy washing (1)	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Hoovering & housework	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Heavy shopping bag	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Driving (2)	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Sex	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Swimming	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Lifting toddlers	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Aerobic exercise	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Gardening	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Work (3)	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES

Please note:

1. This includes carrying heavy loads of wet washing
2. You must be able to make an emergency stop safely without flinching. Contact your insurance company to check.
3. Your consultant or GP will advise when you can return to work. You may need to have amended duties for some time. It will depend on your job.

Listen to your body. If you feel uncomfortable – STOP – and try again the next day.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk