

AFTER CARE FOR WOMEN



 Lane Regional Medical Center

At Lane, we know that going home after having an obstetrical or gynecological procedure can be a bit overwhelming. The following instructions should be used as a helpful guide in taking care of yourself after leaving the hospital. The main thing to remember is to give yourself time to recover.

Lane’s ultimate purpose is to help you heal, so please call us if you have any questions about your recovery process. 658-4159.



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ACTIVITIES

Exhaustion is your worst enemy and should be avoided at all costs. Stop and rest whenever you feel tired.

RETURN VISITS

Your obstetrician's office will schedule follow-up appointments as needed, which is usually two weeks after delivery. Contraceptive methods will be discussed with you then.

BATHING

You may wash your hair at any time and you may begin taking tub baths in two weeks. You may shower at any time.

INTERCOURSE

Do not resume sexual relations until you have been instructed by your doctor. Remember that the possibility of conception exists at any time after delivery, regardless of whether or not you have had a period.

BREAST FEEDING

Your milk usually appears on the third day after delivery. It usually turns whiter than the pale fluid which has been secreted previously. You may experience some discomfort and swelling of the breasts on the day the milk appears. This may be relieved by wearing a supportive bra and applying warm compresses as necessary. It is advisable to drink about 6-8 glasses of fluid a day. If you notice any red, hot, or painful areas on your breasts or if cracking of the nipples occurs, call your doctor's office immediately.

NON-BREAST FEEDING

Until your breasts are completely empty of the milk formed during pregnancy, you should wear a tight bra which compresses and supports the breasts well. Avoid undue handling of the breasts or holding the baby against the breasts as this will bring down your milk even though you are not breast feeding. If the breasts fill up with milk, you may use a breast pump "ONCE" to empty them, wrap an Ace elastic bandage and leave it on for 48-72 hours without removing. Ice packs placed against the breasts are very soothing. Take two aspirin or two Tylenol tablets every three to four hours while awake to reduce swelling. If the swelling is not improved or if you notice any red, hot, or painful areas on your breasts, please call your doctor's office.

AFTER PAINS

If you have had previous children, you may experience some "cramps" for the first few days after delivery. They frequently become more severe during nursing and usually subside within a day or two. If you are extremely uncomfortable, please call your doctor's office.



RECTAL DISCOMFORT AND STITCHES

If you have stitches, you may experience some discomfort from them for the first couple of days at home. The best relief may be obtained by sitting in a shallow tub of warm water approximately three or four times a day. You may apply some of the anesthetic spray which you were given when you left the hospital. If an unusual amount of pain persists in the area of the stitches, contact your doctor immediately.

CONSTIPATION

Do not allow yourself to become constipated. Drink at least 6-8 big glasses of water daily. Do not strain at a stool. If necessary, you may take a mild laxative, such as Milk of Magnesia or Pericolace.

VAGINAL DISCHARGE

The length of time that the vaginal discharge persists can be up to 6 weeks. For the first few days, discharge contains blood that appears bright red, then in about a week, it turns brownish-red in color. When your baby is approximately two weeks old, the discharge may become bright red again and become quite heavy for several days. The discharge should then begin to subside. It may become either yellow or whitish until by the end of the fourth week the discharge is almost completely gone. However, if the bright red discharge is greater than one pad per hour, call your doctor.

FIRST MENSTRUAL PERIOD

Your first menstrual period may occur at any time within twelve weeks after the birth of your baby. It is usually rather heavy. You may pass some large clots and it may last longer than you expect. If you are nursing, you may have an occasional bloody discharge instead of a regular period until four weeks after discontinuing nursing. The first period may stop for several days and then restart again and may come and go over 10 to 14 days. The second period is usually quite normal, but there may be some differences in your cycle than you had prior to pregnancy.

EMOTIONS

Emotions are usually very high after delivery. If you start feeling depressed, please contact your doctor immediately.

FOOD AND DIET

Now is the time for you to continue with a sensible diet program so that if any excess weight has been gained during your pregnancy, you may begin to lose pounds. However, you should continue to use your iron and vitamin capsules which were prescribed for you during your pregnancy for at least six weeks after delivery. Do not start dieting if you are breast feeding.

EXERCISE

No exercises other than walking are allowed until six weeks post partum.

TRAVEL

You may travel after your baby is two weeks old. If you plan to take a long trip, it is advisable that you get out of the car every hour to hour-and-a-half and walk for several minutes to maintain adequate circulation in the legs.

BABY

The baby is probably much stronger and much less fragile than you would imagine and requires just a few basic things. One is to be kept full and the other is to be loved. Check with your pediatrician or your family physician as to the exact formula and schedule of feedings.

After leaving the hospital, should any problems develop which have not been covered in these instructions, please contact your doctor's office.

CESAREAN SECTION INSTRUCTIONS

ACTIVITIES

Even though you may feel well, do not fatigue yourself. You should do no heavy lifting, no cleaning, sweeping or mopping, no preparing meals for the first two weeks at home. You should lift nothing heavier than your baby; however you may change the baby, feed or nurse the baby, and give baths and general care to your baby. Exhaustion is your worst enemy. You should get at least eight hours of sleep at night. After two weeks you may drive, as long as you are not taking pain medication and can push on the car brakes quickly without abdominal pain.

RETURN VISITS

If you do not already have an appointment scheduled, please call your doctor's office within one week of being discharged from the hospital. Contraception methods will be discussed with you during your follow-up appointment.

INTERCOURSE

Do not resume sexual relations until six weeks after delivery. Remember that the possibility of conception exists at anytime after delivery regardless of whether or not you have had a period.

BREAST FEEDING

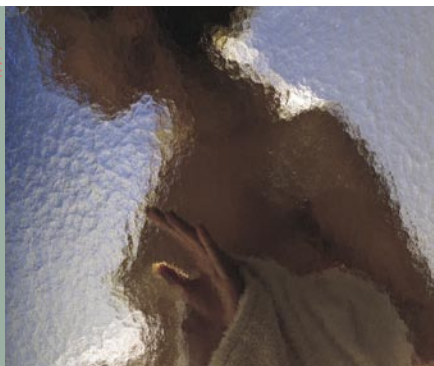
Your milk usually appears on the third day after delivery. It usually turns whiter than the pale fluid which has been secreted previously. You may experience some discomfort and swelling of the breasts on the day the milk appears. This may be relieved by wearing a supportive bra and applying warm compresses to your breasts as necessary. It is advisable to drink about 6-8 glasses of fluid a day. If you notice any red, hot, or painful areas on your breasts or if cracking of the nipples occur, call your doctor's office immediately.

NON-BREAST FEEDING

Until your breasts are completely empty of the milk formed during pregnancy, you should wear a tight bra, which compresses and supports the breasts well. Avoid undue handling of the breasts or holding the baby against the breasts

BATHING

You may take a shower or wash your hair any time. The incision may be allowed to get wet, but it should be dried well afterwards. Do not take a tub bath until instructed by your doctor.



EMOTIONS

Emotions are usually very high after delivery. If you start feeling depressed, please contact your doctor immediately.

FOOD AND DIET

Now is the time for you to continue with a sensible diet program so that if any excess weight has been gained during your pregnancy, you may begin to lose pounds. However, you should continue to use your iron and vitamin capsules which were prescribed for you during your pregnancy for at least six weeks after delivery. Do not start dieting if you are breast feeding.

EXERCISE

No exercises other than walking are allowed until six weeks post partum.

BABY

The baby is probably much stronger and much less fragile than you would imagine and requires just a few basic things. One is to be kept full and the other is to be loved. Check with your pediatrician or your family physician as to the exact formula and schedule of feedings.



After leaving the hospital, should any problems develop which have not been covered in these instructions, please contact your doctor's office.

Your first office visit should be 1 to 2 weeks from the time of discharge. If you haven't already, call your doctor to schedule an appointment. The trip from the hospital to your home is enough exercise for the day. You should go to bed for the remainder of the day, and discourage visitors for the first several days at home.

ACTIVITIES

Even though you may feel well, do not fatigue yourself; to over-do activities now could seriously hamper your recovery. You should do no heavy lifting, no cleaning, sweeping or mopping, no preparing meals for the first two weeks at home. You should get at least one hour bed rest in the morning, two hours bed rest in the afternoon and at least eight hours sleep at night. The first time you should leave your home should be when you go to the office for your first checkup. By the end of the second week you may ride in your car to visit your friends or go shopping, but you may not drive yourself while on pain medication. If there is a question as to whether or not you should do something, do not do it until you have checked with your doctor.

VAGINAL DISCHARGE

After both abdominal surgery and vaginal surgery there is a vaginal discharge. It may be blood tinged or yellow in nature. You may wear an external pad, but no tampon. By the end of the second week you may see some small

sutures in the vaginal discharge and at that time there may be some bright red bleeding. **DO NOT BECOME ALARMED.** If the bleeding is excessive notify your doctor.

DOUCHING AND INTERCOURSE

You are not to have any sexual intercourse for six weeks. No douching is allowed even if you develop a heavy vaginal discharge.

INCISION

Your incision will be healing well by the time you leave the hospital, but complete healing does not occur for a few weeks. A scab may form along the incision line, but it will gradually go away. There may be a clear or bloody drainage from the edge of the incision. This is normal, do not become alarmed.

BATHING

You may take a shower or wash your hair any time. A tub bath may be taken by the end of the fourth week. The incision may be allowed to get wet, but it should be dried well afterwards. If you have an abdominal incision, it should be cleaned with a warm, wet cloth 4 to 5 times daily and dried well afterwards to help prevent infection.

EXERCISE

No exercise other than walking is allowed for six weeks.

DIET

Do not become constipated. Eat figs, prunes, etc., or take a mild laxative like Milk of Magnesia, Doxidan, or Surfak. Drink at least six to eight glasses of water daily.

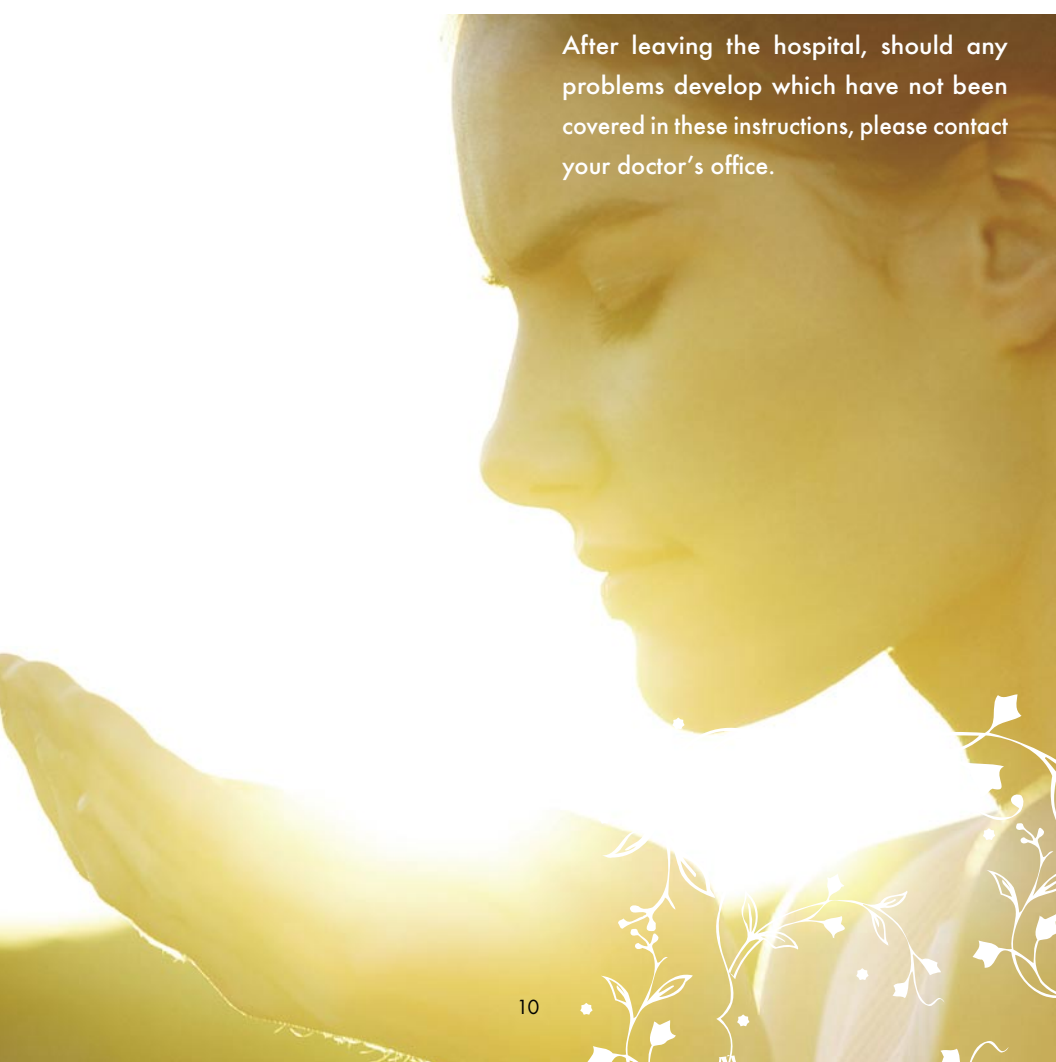
PAIN

You may have some soreness by the time you go home, but pain should not be a severe problem. You may take the pain medication which was prescribed for you when you left the hospital. If the pain becomes severe or

continues longer than a week after discharge you should notify the doctor's office.

BLADDER

After surgery you may notice frequency of urination because of the frequent bed rest and increased fluid intake, but if you should notice burning, frequency, and urgency of urination with chills and fever, call your doctor immediately.



After leaving the hospital, should any problems develop which have not been covered in these instructions, please contact your doctor's office.

Your first doctor's office visit should be scheduled in **TWO WEEKS**. If you haven't already, call your doctor's office to schedule an appointment.

ACTIVITIES

You may feel fine or you may feel a little tired after your surgery. Usually within 48 hours you may resume all normal activities around the house.

VAGINAL DISCHARGE

After a D&C or L.E.E.P., there may be some bloody or purulent bloody drainage from the vagina for approximately one week to ten days. You should use an **EXTERNAL** pad if necessary, but **NO TAMPONS**. Call your doctor if you are soaking more than two pads per hour.

INTERCOURSE

You are not to have any sexual intercourse until you are seen by your doctor at your first visit.

BATHING

You may take a shower or wash your hair at any time after discharge from the hospital. You may take a tub bath after two weeks.

PAIN

You should have only minimal pain or soreness after a D&C or L.E.E.P. If there are

some abdominal cramps and backache, this is from the uterus becoming smaller at this time. You may take the pain medication prescribed for you when you left the hospital.

RETURN TO WORK

You may return to your job within one week of the D&C or L.E.E.P.



ANY TIME a problem arises, you may call your doctor's office or Lane Regional Medical Center and we will be happy to discuss the matter with you.



 Lane Regional Medical Center

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