



Care After Gynecological Surgery

Recommendations for care after a surgery, including pain control, medicine and when to return to normal activity levels.

How do I care for the incision?

- The incision will be covered with Steri-strips (small tapes) or glue. Steri-strips stay on until they are curling at the edges and look like they are ready to fall off.
- Your child or teen should not take a bath or go swimming until the doctor says that it is OK. This will be about 2 to 4 weeks after surgery.
- Your child or teen may shower. They should not scrub the incision. The water can run down over the incision and a little soap may be used if needed.
- Cover the Steri-strips with saran wrap or a plastic sheet held on by tape when showering. Do this for the first 3 or 4 days after surgery to keep them from falling off.
- The incision should be dried after a shower. A blow dryer on a cool setting can be used to do this.
- For labial or vulvar surgery, your child or teen may need to wear a pad for the first 1 to 2 weeks. Keeping the area clean and dry will allow the area to heal faster.

Will my child or teen be in pain?

- After surgery, your child or teen will likely feel pain near their incision. Sharp, shooting pains in the incision that last a few seconds are a normal part of the healing process. We will partner with you and your child to prevent and relieve pain as completely as possible.
- You know your child or teen best. No matter the level of pain, believe they are hurting and respond right away. In addition to medicine prescribed for pain, you can also help them cope by distracting them with music, games, TV or videos.

What medicine will my child or teen take after the surgery?

- Your child or teen may be given ibuprofen and acetaminophen (Tylenol) when they go home. Use this medicine only if recommend by your child's healthcare provider. Check with the healthcare provider first before giving any type of medicine to your child.
- If your child or teen was given a numbing cream, they can rub it on when needed. They should wash their hands before and after using the numbing cream.
- Use the ibuprofen and acetaminophen regularly to control the pain, as recommended.

- Your child or teen may also be given a narcotic pain medication (oxycodone). Save this pain medicine for when the pain is not well controlled with ibuprofen and acetaminophen, during times of high activity or at bedtime to help them sleep.
- Your teen should not drive a car while taking narcotic pain medication.
- Decrease the amount of pain medicine slightly every day, until your child or teen no longer needs it.
- Pain medicine makes some people constipated. Your child may be prescribed a stool softener to help with that.
- To keep your family safe, store medicines inside a locked cabinet or location where others cannot easily get to them. Once your child or teen has recovered from surgery, dispose of all unused prescription medicines. Taking leftover pain or other medicines on purpose or by accident, can be very dangerous. For more information about safe disposal of unused medications including pain medications, read our handout “How to Get Rid of Unused Prescription Medicines” at seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE784 or visit takebackyourmeds.org to find a take back place near you.

Will my child or teen have constipation after surgery?

- Your child or teen may not have a bowel movement before leaving the hospital. They should have one a few days after leaving the hospital. As long as your child or teen is passing gas and does not have nausea, a few days longer is OK.
- Narcotic pain medicine causes constipation. You can give your child or teen Miralax as your doctor has directed. This will help your child or teen have a bowel movement if they have not had one yet.

What can my child or teen eat after surgery?

- Your child or teen can eat whatever sounds good. Bland and softer foods are recommended the first 2 to 3 days at home. Raw vegetables and fried food are harder to digest and may cause gas pain.

When can my child or teen return to normal activity?

After surgery your child or teen:

- May feel tired. They may need to take morning and afternoon naps for the first few days after surgery. They may feel tired for a few weeks after surgery. After major surgery the body needs extra energy to heal.
- Can walk around the day after surgery. They will not be able to walk really long distances for about a week.
- Can climb stairs right away. Going upstairs will be slower than normal and they may need to stop and rest. Your child or teen should be extra careful when walking down stairs.

To Learn More

- Adolescent Gynecology
206-987-3005
- After hours on-call Gynecologist
206-987-2000
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

- Should become more active each day. If your child or teen is too active one day, they may be extra tired the next day.
- Can return to school or not active (sedentary) work within a week, but may be tired. They may need to take more time off after major surgery.
- Your doctor may recommend that your child or teen avoid sports or physical education class for 2 to 4 weeks after surgery.
- Should not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for the first 6 weeks after major surgery, unless the doctor says it is OK.

If the procedure was in the vagina or the entry to the vagina (labia or hymen):

- Your child or teen should not put anything into the vagina for the first 2 to 6 weeks after surgery.

If your child or teen had a laparoscopy (a procedure used to view the ovaries and the outside of the fallopian tubes and uterus, with a scope inserted through a small incision below the belly button) or had ovaries or a cyst removed:

- Your child or teen can use tampons 1 week after surgery. They should not put anything else in the vagina for 6 weeks.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology clinic at 206-987-3005 during normal office hours (Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), or call the paging operator at 206-987-2000 or 866-987-2000 after hours and on weekends and ask for the on-call gynecology doctor if your child or teen has any of these signs or symptoms:

- Fever of 101.5° F or higher
- Severe vaginal bleeding
- Vomiting
- Severe pain that does not go away
- Skin around the incision is red, is draining pus, blood, or a lot of watery liquid