

Wishing you a speedy recovery

Getting home from hospital, is the first step in making a speedy recovery. Most patients have a number of questions once they arrive home and this list hopefully will answer most of the questions that you may have. I am looking forward to seeing you again soon, when you will visit my rooms for your first postsurgical visit.

Your next appointment: Please make sure that you have arranged a follow-up appointment. This should be one or two weeks after a laparoscopic procedure and four to six weeks after a laparotomy. If you have not received a follow-up appointment yet, please contact my practice manager on (07) 3847 3033, from 8.30 to 4.30 weekdays.

Discharge medication – pain killers: Please take the pain killers as prescribed in hospital. Please take them regularly (by the clock) for at least one week after discharge from hospital as it is much easier to maintain a pain-free state than to fight pain.

Flying: All air lines will require a certificate clearing you for flying. Please contact my practice manager on (07) 3847 3033 for a certificate.

Driving: While you could be fit for driving after your operation medically, in the case of an accident your insurance could question your fitness to drive if you were in pain or on pain killers. Please commence driving once you are pain free and do not require analgesics any more.

Menopause: If you had periods prior to your surgery and if both your ovaries had to be removed at surgery, you will become menopausal. This means that the hormone production from the ovaries and the hormone levels will drop immediately and menopausal symptoms (e.g., hot flushes) could develop. You may wish to try Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), which often is given as daily tablets. I try to prescribe the lowest possible dose for only one year as I am aware of possible side effects of HRT if it is used long-term. If you were menopausal before your surgery your hormone levels would not change and no further medication would be required.

Bladder and bowel function: If emptying your bladder causes a burning sensation, please see your nearest GP for a urine test and antibiotic medication. You may have acquired a urinary tract infection (UTI). For weeks to months your bowel function could be impaired as a result of your recent surgery. Please try natural fibre (beans, lentils, or pear and prune juices) and natural yoghurt first rather than laxatives.

Vaginal discharge: After a hysterectomy, the vagina has been sewn with stitches. As a sign of wound healing, a slight vaginal discharge is normal for up to 6 weeks and can even be blood-stained. Should your discharge become smelly, please contact your nearest GP who will prescribe antibiotics for a presumed local infection for you.

Sexual intercourse and swimming (full bath) after hysterectomy: I recommend abstaining from sexual intercourse and a full bath for 4 to 6 weeks after your surgery. Otherwise, the vagina could get infected and you might require antibiotic treatment.

Hygiene: Clean water is good for the surgical wound and does not cause harm. I recommend NOT using soaps or creams into the wound as this could cause an infection. You may use creams again once the wound has healed completely.

Exercise: The sutures used for your operation will hold all structures together regardless of lifting, straining or exercise. However, if you overdo it, you will feel sore, which is a sign that you did too much and you ought to relax more. You will find out by yourself how much physical exercise you tolerate well. The amount of exercise you can do will increase with time. Regular exercise is very important for your health and I recommend that you return to your usual routines as soon as possible. This is also similar for physical housework, you may need to increase this slowly before returning to your presurgical level of housework.

Pap smear: If you had a hysterectomy for a cancer or pre-cancer, Prof. Obermair will advise you on PAP smears for you in the future. If you had a hysterectomy for benign (non-cancerous) reasons, you will not need PAP smears any longer.

Back to work: The time needed off work will be determined by the type of work you do (office or manual) and by how urgent you have to be back at work. Please discuss your needs for a sickness certificate with my practice manager on (07) 3847 3033.

Sutures: I use sutures which do not need to be removed and which were shown to reveal an excellent cosmetic result in studies. However, these sutures could slightly stick out of the skin for a couple of weeks. These sutures will become loose and finally fall off by themselves. If the wound site becomes red and sore, please contact our rooms, your GP or the nearest emergency department. Wound swabs need to be taken and you may require antibiotic tablets to treat a local infection.

Should you feel unwell after being discharged from hospital, please contact my rooms on (07) 3847 3033 or after hours (07) 3830 5824 regardless whether you had surgery at Greenslopes or outside Brisbane. If there are problems, I want to be informed first; only when I know there is a problem, I can help finding a solution. Sometimes, another qualified doctor who I completely trust will take your call and help you, should I not be available.

In approximately six weeks you will receive a questionnaire which I ask all my patients to complete if possible. This helps me to continually check that I am doing the very best for my patients at all times.

With the very best wishes,

Prof. Andreas Obermair

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Phone 07 3847 3033 | Monday to Friday 8.30 to 4.30 | After Hours 07 3830 5824