

2022

**Centre intégré de  
santé et de services  
sociaux de Laval**

# **Preparation guide for a surgery**

## **Total abdominal hysterectomy**



**This guide will help you  
understand and get ready for  
your surgery**

**Read it over with your family  
and bring this guide with you  
the day of your surgery**

**Québec** 

**A publication of**

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## ANATOMY

The uterus is a pear-shaped muscle whose upper part measures on average 7.5 cm in length and 5 cm in width.

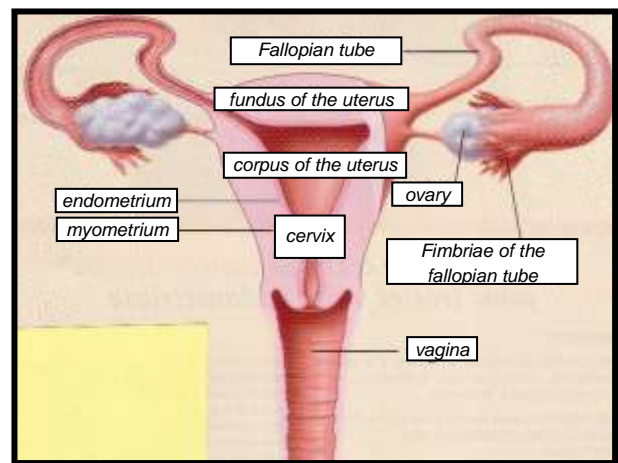
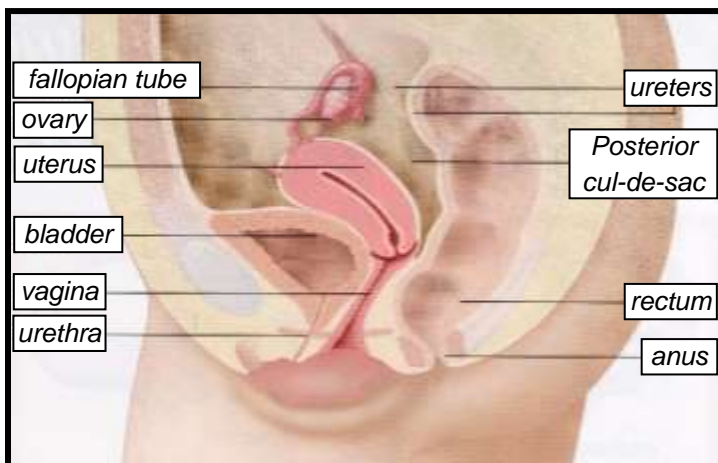
Its walls are about 1.25 cm thick. Its size can vary depending on the number of children a woman has given birth to.

The uterus is located in the pelvis between the bladder and the rectum. It is held in the pelvic cavity by several ligaments. The uterus acts as a nest during conception. It is its inner layer (the endometrium) that thickens during the menstrual cycle and that will detach at the time of menstruation (if there is no pregnancy).

The ovaries are located at the end of the fallopian tubes. They are oval in shape and about 3 cm long. The ovaries and fallopian tubes form what are called the appendages.

The function of the ovaries is to produce hormones and release an egg each month until menopause.

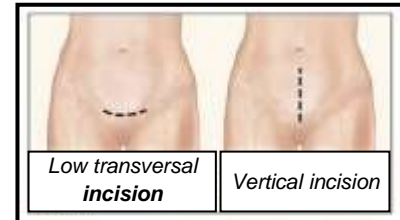
The fallopian tubes connect the ovaries to the uterus. They are about 10 cm (4 inches) long each.



From the leaflet prepared by Abbott Laboratories, Limited in January 2003 on Lupron Depot entitled "To help calm the endometriosis storm."

## WHAT IS AN ABDOMINAL HYSTERECTOMY?

Hysterectomy involves removing the uterus and cervix by making an incision (wound) on the abdomen, most often at the pubic bone (a transverse incision called a "bikini"). In some cases, the incision may be vertical.



Once the cervix has been removed, vaginal cytology (PAP test) is no longer necessary **except** in certain special cases. You can confirm this information with your gynecologist.

It should be noted that after a hysterectomy, there is no more menstruation.

## ASSOCIATED INTERVENTIONS

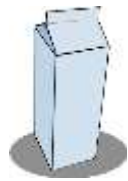
- Bilateral salpingectomy:** Is the removal of the fallopian tubes only.
- Unilateral salpingo-oophorectomy:** Unilateral if the fallopian tube and ovary are removed on one side, bilateral if both fallopian tubes and ovaries are removed.
- Lymphadenectomy:** This involves removing lymph nodes (small organs of the immune system) from around the uterus for further testing by your gynecologist to check for the spread of abnormal cells in endometrial, cervical or ovarian cancer.
- Epiploectomy:** This is the removal of a layer of fat surrounding the intestines (omentum).
- Cytoreduction:** In cases of ovarian masses, this is the removal of tissue from the bowel and peritoneum (the membrane that surrounds the organs in the belly).

You will become menopausal only if both ovaries are removed. The gynecologist will inform you about possible hormone therapy.

## PREOPERATIVE DIET

The goal of this diet is to ensure that you have the strength and nutrients you need to recover quickly.

### Suggestions to boost your protein intake



	Add this	To this
	Skim milk powder or protein powder supplement (Nestlé Beneprotein®)	Cooked cereals, scrambled eggs, sauces, mashed potatoes, soups, cream sauces, milk, milkshakes, cream desserts, custards, etc.
	Milk (2% or 3.25% MF)	Hot cereals, soups, casseroles, hot chocolate (instead of water)
	Soy beverage	Smoothies, soups
	Greek yogurt	Fresh or canned fruit, vegetables, potatoes, rice, pancakes, casseroles, stews, soups, vegetable or fruit dips
	Hard-boiled eggs	Sandwiches, salads, vegetables, potatoes, sauces and soups
	Peanut butter or nut butter	Cookies, milkshakes, sandwiches, crackers, muffins, fruit slices, toast, ice cream
	Tofu	Milkshakes, soups, casseroles, stir-fries, salads
	Canned dried peas or beans, legumes and lentils (if you can tolerate these)	Casseroles, soups, stews, salads, rice, pasta and dips
	Seeds and nuts (if you can tolerate these)	Salads, cereal, ice cream, yogurt
	Pieces of cooked beef, pork, poultry, seafood or fish	Salads, soups, scrambled eggs, quiches, baked potato, pasta



To complete your diet, you can also take a supplement such as Ensure or Boost.

## EXERCISES

Exercising helps ensure that your body is in the best possible condition for your surgery.

If you are already exercising, keep up your good habits. If not, slowly start adding exercise to your daily routine.

Exercise does not have to be strenuous to be effective. In fact, a 15-minute walk is much better than doing nothing at all.

You can also start practicing the exercises you will need to do after surgery (see page 21).

## TOBACCO

Quitting smoking or reducing the amount you smoke will decrease your risk of respiratory problems after your surgery, aid in the healing of your surgical wound, and help you better manage pain.

If you need help to quit smoking, don't hesitate to contact:

**If you need help to quit smoking, don't hesitate to contact :**

- Your CLSC at **450 978-8300, extension 3169** (for Laval residents).
- Your pharmacist or family doctor.
- The Quit Smoking Centre nearest you at **1-866-JARRETE (527-7383)**.

Website: [tobaccofreequebec.ca/iquitnow/](http://tobaccofreequebec.ca/iquitnow/).

## ALCOHOL

Avoid drinking alcohol **7 days before your surgery**. Alcohol can interact with some medications and increase the risk of bleeding and complications.



**To get help to stop right now, contact the regional hotline (for Laval residents) :**

Alcochoix+ Laval at 450 622-5110, ext. 64005.

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/alcohol-drugs-gambling/alcochoix-plus/>

## DISCHARGE PLANNING

Before your operation, it is important that you prepare in advance for your return home.



- Ask another adult to come pick you up at the hospital. You must organize a ride home in advance. This person must be available to pick you up once your discharge is signed.
- Prepare meals in advance for the days after your operation.
- Get help for errands, housework and appointments.
- If you live by yourself and your operation reduces your mobility, you need to think about having another adult stay with you during your recovery.

You can have your surgery if you are menstruating

## BEFORE YOUR VISIT TO THE PREADMISSION CLINIC

Your record will be transferred to the hospital's Preadmission Clinic. Someone will call you with the date and time of your Preadmission Clinic appointment.

Date and time of your appointment : \_\_\_\_\_

### During your Preadmission Clinic visit

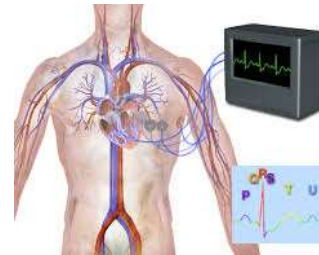
#### You will:

Meet with a nurse, who will explain how to prepare for surgery and what to expect during your hospital stay.

Have an ECG (electrocardiogram) if the nurse determines that you need one.

Have blood taken, if required. You will be sent to the hospital's test centre.

The nurse will tell you if you need more tests or have to meet with other doctors or professionals.



## CONSENT TO SURGERY AND ANESTHESIA



At your preadmission meeting, the nurse will ask you to sign the consent to surgery and anesthesia.

This consent means that the surgeon clearly explained why you need this operation, what the procedure entails, the potential risks, and the desired results of the operation.

If you did not get the proper information, you must contact your surgeon. The preadmission clinic nurse can help you. You will need to sign the consent form the morning of your surgery.

**For further information about anesthesia, please read the guide on anesthesia and pain relief Information guide which the nurse will provide when attending your preadmission meeting.**

## WHEN TO STOP OR CONTINUE YOUR MEDICATION

**At your appointment** with your surgeon or preadmission nurse, you will be informed whether you need to stop or continue your medication before your surgery.



- Aspirin®,  Asaphen®,  Rivasa®,  Entrophen®,  Novasen®,  
 Persantine®,  MSD AAS,  Aggrenox® (dipyridamole/ASA), etc.  
 Stop \_\_\_\_ days before your surgery.  
 Do not stop this medication.
- Plavix® (clopidogrel)  
 Stop \_\_\_\_ days before your surgery.  
 Do not stop this medication.
- Effient® (prasugrel),  
 Ticlid® (ticlopidine),  
 Brilinta® (ticagrelor)  
 Stop \_\_\_\_ days before your surgery.  
 Do not stop.
- **Anti-inflammatory drugs** (e.g., ibuprofen such as Advil®, Motrin® (including for children), Celebrex®, Maxidol®, Aleve®, Naprosyn®, etc.)  
Stop 2 days before your surgery.
- **All natural products** (glucosamine, omega 3, vitamin E, etc.).  
Stop 7 days before your surgery.

You can keep taking drugs such as Tylenol®, Tylenol® Extra-Strength, acetaminophen and Tempra® until midnight the night before your surgery.

If you are taking Coumadin®, Sintrom®, Pradaxa®, Xarelto®, Eliquis®, Lixiana® :

A hospital pharmacist will call you approximately 1 to 3 weeks before your surgery and may ask you to have a blood sample taken.

When the pharmacy department has received your results, you will be called again about when to stop taking this medication.



**IMPORTANT** You must follow this instruction.

## ADMISSION DATE AND TIME

You will receive a call from the hospital's pre-admission department. The secretary will inform you of the date of your surgery. You will be informed of the time of your arrival at the hospital by phone **24 to 48 hours before** the surgery.



Date of your surgery: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival hour: \_\_\_\_\_

### SYMPTOMS TO MONITOR

If you have any of these symptoms or conditions one week before the date of your surgery:

- You have a sore throat, a cold or the flu.
- You have a fever.
- You are taking antibiotics.
- You have a contagious disease (e.g., chicken pox), or you have recently been exposed to someone with a contagious disease.
- You have a possible or unconfirmed pregnancy.
- Redness, inflammation, discharge, wound or any other problem at the operating site.



**Call immediately  
to inform the administrative officer :**

Gynecology..... 450 975-5598

## ❑ BOWEL PREPARATION

**Do this preparation only if the nurse asks you to; she will give you more precise instructions. \*\***

A hysterectomy requires a Fleet® enema. This enema is used to empty and clean the rectal ampulla (the reservoir for stool) before the surgery.

When to do the enema: Around 8 pm the evening before the surgery

### How to do it:

- Buy a regular Fleet® enema (intra-rectal) from the pharmacy. Ask the pharmacist for help, if necessary.
- Administer the enema as follows:
- Choose the position that is most comfortable for you: lie down on your side with the right knee bent (1) or on your back (3).
- Remove the protective cap from the lubricated tip.
- Insert the lubricated tip into the anus.
- Squeeze the bottle to get the liquid into your rectum.
- Remove the bottle.
- Try to keep the contents of the enema inside your rectum until you feel a strong urge to have a bowel movement (about 5 minutes minimum).



If all of these instructions are not respected, your surgery may be cancelled.

## PREOPERATIVE DIET

### The night before your surgery

You can eat normally.



### The day of your surgery

#### For all users

Starting from midnight the night before your surgery:



- Do not eat solid food.
- Do not consume dairy products.
- Do not consume alcohol and do not smoke.
- For the consuming of clear liquids, refer to the tables on the following page.

## THE DAY OF YOUR SURGERY

### At home

The nurse will tell you if you need to follow the following beverage instruction

- **You MUST remain fasting** (nothing to eat or drink from midnight the night before your surgery). Do not chew gum eat candy.



You can brush your teeth but avoid swallowing the water.

OR

- **You MUST drink clear fluids** before the surgery.

- Allowed clear fluids include:
- Water
- Juice without pulp (no pulp is mandatory)
- Coffee or black tea (no milk)



Image : Wikimedia Commons, 2006

Images : pixabay



Make sure that you **ONLY** drink these clear fluids and nothing else.

### When should I stop drinking clear fluids?

You must stop drinking these fluids the morning of your surgery. The exact time depends on when you need to arrive at the hospital that morning.

Someone will call you 24 to 48 hours before your surgery will give you at what time you must arrive at the hospital.

I need to arrive at the hospital at...	I have to stop drinking clear fluids at...
Before 10 a.m.	6 a.m.
After 10 a.m.	8 a.m.
I do not have a specific time and have to wait at home to be called for my surgery.	11 a.m.



**You must follow these instructions to ensure your surgery is safe and to prevent serious complications.**

## HYGIENE BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

- Dexidin disinfectant soap (4%):** The morning of the surgery, you must shower using the antimicrobial soap you purchased at the gift shop at the main entrance of Block C or Block D or at the pharmacy. You must use the soap from your chin to your toes and then rinse



**Put on clean clothes after your shower.**



Images : pixabay



No makeup, no nail polish (fingers and toes), no fake nails, no fake eyelashes, no cream, deodorant or perfume/cologne, no jewelry or body piercings.

**Do not shave** the area to be operated on



### Medication

Take these medications **ONLY**  
(with some water).

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**If you do not follow all these instructions your operation may be cancelled..**

## WHAT TO BRING TO THE HOSPITAL

- This guide.
- A valid health insurance card.
- Your hospital card.
- Your medications, drops and pumps in their original containers.
- A complete list of your medications (ask your pharmacist for this list).
- Slippers, dressing gown, clothing and comfortable shoes.
- Tissues, toothbrush and soap.
- Notebook and pencil.
- If you wear glasses, contact lenses, a hearing aid or dentures: bring your kits or containers and label them with your name.
- If you use a cane, crutches or a walker, bring them to the hospital and label them with your name.
- **You need to bring sanitary napkins, no tampons.**



Please leave all your jewelry and other valuable objects at home.

**The hospital is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

**(The lockers do not have locks).**

**Rings will have to be cut off if not removed beforehand.**

## WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE SURGERY UNIT

You'll be staying at the hospital after your surgery: go directly to local RC-5.

- **Only one person** can accompany you.
- After you arrive at the unit, you should expect to wait a moment until being called for your surgery. Bring something to entertain yourself if you want (something to read, a music player with headphones, etc.).
- Your room might not be ready when you arrive. In this case, you will be prepared in the day surgery unit. **Please leave your suitcase in your car.** The suitcase can be retrieved after your surgery once your room is available.



## THE SURGERY UNIT

- At your arrival, the nurse will help you to get ready for your surgery.
- She will give you an hospital gown to put on.
- She will proceed to a blood test if necessary.
- She will go over all preparations that you had to do before your surgery.

## OPERATING ROOM

- You have to urinate before you leave.
- You may only wear the hospital gown and no other personal clothing.



**You must remove your :**

- Glasses, contact lenses;
- Underwear, jewelry and body piercings;
- Dentures, hearing, hair piece;
- Sanitary napkin, tampon.

Staff will direct you to the operating room.

**For further information about anesthesia, please read the guide on anesthesia – information guide, the nurse will provide when attending your preadmission meeting.**

## IN THE RECOVERY ROOM

- You will wake up in the recovery room.
- No visitors are allowed in the recovery room.
- The staff will make you comfortable on your stretcher or bed.
- You will not be able to eat or drink right away. The nurse will allow you to do so when you are stable.
- When your condition is stable and your pain is well controlled, you will be transferred to the care unit.

## RETURN TO THE INPATIENT UNIT

Once on the unit, 2 visitors are allowed at a time (up to a maximum of 8:30pm). (1 visitor only in day surgery).

The staff will make you comfortable on your stretcher or bed and take your vital signs several times. The nurse will also check your dressings and drains if applicable. She will assess your general condition and pain level.

A urinary catheter (tube in the bladder) will be installed during the surgery to allow the evacuation of urine, via a collection tube, into a bag. It will be removed the day after the surgery or as prescribed by the gynecologist.

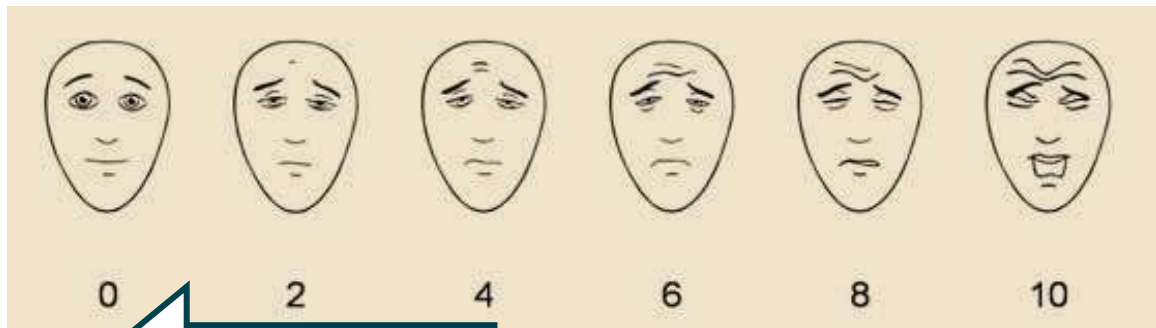
The gynecologist may have installed a Jackson-Pratt drain (tube) during the surgery. It will be removed the day after the operation, or on your gynecologist order.



## CONTROLLING YOUR PAIN

It is normal to have pain after an operation. The amount of pain is different for everyone. However, you can control your pain with the medication prescribed by your surgeon.

**You will be asked to assess your pain on a scale of 0 to 10.**



**Our goal is to keep your pain below 4/10**

### **Pain relief is important because this will help you:**

- Breathe more easily.
- Move around more easily.
- Sleep better.
- Eat better.
- Recover more quickly.
- Do things that are important to you.

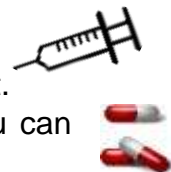
### **Techniques to relieve pain**

Means that can help you reduce your discomfort :

- Sitting or semi-sitting position.
- Getting up - walking.
- Administration of analgesics (medication to relieve pain).

### **Analgesics (pain medication)**

- Injections (shots) will be given to you if your pain is too great.
- Medication in pill form will be given to you as soon as you can tolerate it or eat.




Start your circulation and other exercises as soon as you wake up. (See pages 21,22, 23).

## BREATHING EXERCICES

### Deep breathing

#### To do as soon as you wake up

1. Lie on your back, with your legs slightly bent. Place one hand on your stomach and the other below your breasts.
- 
2. Keep your lips pursed and exhale **slowly** through your mouth. This will double the length of your breath. Move your belly back in to expel the air from your lungs.
  3. **Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose or mouth.** Feel your lungs inflate. Just the hand on your belly should rise.



**This exercise is not easy to do. Therefore, you need to practice before your operation.**

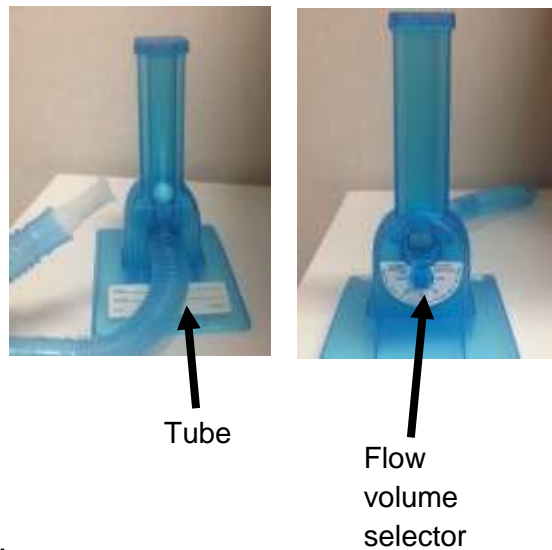
### Spirometer

\* The preadmission nurse will give you this device if you need it.

#### How do I use it?

Remove the device from the package. Connect the mouthpiece to the tubing. Connect the tubing to the outlet on the other side of the flow volume selector.

1. Get into a comfortable seated position.
2. Adjust the level by turning the flow volume selector to the right that will increase the difficulty of the exercise).
3. Hold the device upright in front of you (if you lean it to the front or back, the exercise is too easy). Exhale normally.



4. Place your lips snugly around the mouthpiece and then inhale. Take in enough air to lift the ball.
5. Continue inhaling to keep the ball elevated for 3 seconds. This step lets you expand your lungs as much as possible. Hold your inhalation for 3 seconds, even if the ball drops back down.
6. Then, breathe out through your mouth through pursed lips. Take a break to breathe normally, and then try again.
7. Repeat steps 4 to 6 for about 5 minutes per hour or as per your nurse's instructions.

Keep the device near you so that you remember to do the exercises. Between uses, you can keep the mouthpiece attached to the end of the tubing.

**Spirometer breathing exercises helps you :**

- Eliminate lung secretions to prevent respiratory complications.
- Regain and maintain good lung expansion.
- Stimulate the breathing reflex, which is slowed by anesthesia and pain medication.
- Improve your well-being and resume your usual activities more quickly.

**Coughing after abdominal surgery**

If you feel like coughing or sneezing, first apply light pressure to the operated area (lower abdomen) with your hands or a pillow. This will limit your belly movements and pain as you cough.

## CIRCULATION EXERCICES<sup>1</sup>

These exercises encourages blood circulation in your legs while you are lying down. They are very important because they can prevent serious complications, such as blood clots in the veins of your legs (thrombophlebitis).

### Toe flexion and extension

While lying on your back or sitting with your legs stretched out, point your toes to the foot of the bed and then point them toward your chin. Repeat the exercise 30 times a minute for 1 to 2 minutes, every 2 hours.



Image : Wikimedia Commons (2017)

### Ankle rotation

While lying on your back or sitting, make ankle circles from left to right and then from right to left. Repeat this exercise 30 times a minute for 1 to 2 minutes, every two hours.



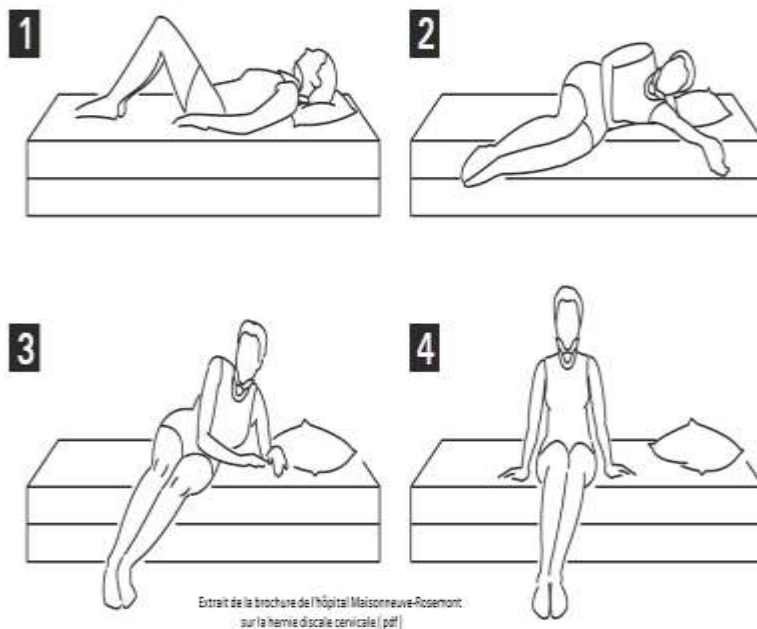
Image : Wikimedia Commons (2017)

<sup>1</sup> Circulatory exercises are taken from Paradis and Poissant.

## GETTING UP

When you get up for the first time, a staff member will be there to assist you, however, you should only get up at your own pace. You need to walk and increase the distance you walk each time you get up. Increase your pace gradually.

**To help you get in and out of bed, you need to raise slightly the head of your bed.**



1. Lying on your back, bend your knees.
2. Turn toward your non-operated side.
3. Push against the mattress using your elbow on the non-operated side and your other hand to sit up on the edge of the bed. Slide your legs over the bed at the same time.
4. Stay in this position for a few minutes. Take a few deep breaths and move your feet around.
5. If you do not feel well, tell the nurse or care attendant.

Staff will help you sit in an armchair if you need to.

## YOUR DISCHARGE FROM THE UNIT

- Your gynecologist is the one who will discharge you.
- You must ask another adult to come pick you up, since you cannot drive after your operation. You must plan a ride home.
- If you live by yourself, it is a good idea to ask another adult to stay with you for 24 hours for your safety reasons.
- The nurse may give you a prescription for pain medication, which you must get at your pharmacy. Your nurse will also give you a pamphlet about what you need to know if you need to take a narcotic medication for pain.
- The nurse will give you a follow-up appointment with your surgeon. You must absolutely go to this appointment, even if you feel well.



Gynecologist name : \_\_\_\_\_

Date & time of appointment : \_\_\_\_\_

- You will receive a proof of hospitalization or medical leave from work form if you need one. Your gynecologist should be notified if you need these documents.



**If you have insurance forms that need to be completed, contact your gynecologist surgeon's secretary at his private office. (See gynecologist referral on page 36).**

- All forms must be forwarded to the private office. No forms will be filled out at the hospital on the day of surgery.

## ONCE YOU GET BACK HOME - INSTRUCTIONS

### Your incision

Depending on your procedure, the wounds will be covered with steri-strips. You might experienced of numbness or burning around the surgical wound. This sensation will gradually disappear.



### Hygiene

1. Do not get the surgical dressing wet. When the dressing is removed, showering is allowed unless otherwise advised by the gynecologist.
2. If you have steri-strips, you let them peel off by themselves. You can remove them if they have not fallen off after 8 to 10 days.
3. You can wet the Steri-strips in the shower.
4. The wound can be cleaned with a mild unscented soap, rinsed well and dried. If you have staples, they will be removed 7 to 10 days later, via a referral to your CLSC.
5. You will notice a reddish vaginal discharge at first, which will become pinkish then brownish. This is caused by the insertion of a forceps in the vagina during the procedure. Minimal vaginal discharge (spotting) may persist for 3 to 4 weeks after the gynecological surgery.
6. No tampon should be used after surgery.
7. You can take a bath after 2 weeks and as soon as the steri-strips or staples are removed, if applicable. No spa or lake bathing until the wound has healed (about 4 weeks).



### Abdominal swelling

You may notice some abdominal swelling in the evening. This could last for some time.

### Going Back to work

The return to work depends on the type of work you do. Your gynecologist and the nurse will explain the details and the duration of your recovery. The recovery period is 4 to 6 weeks.



### Breast feeding

If you are breastfeeding, ask the surgeon or nurse if you can continue. Generally, you need to wait 2 to 3 hours after having general anesthesia before breastfeeding your baby. As soon as you return home, you can breastfeed if you feel alert and comfortable



## NUTRITION AND HYDRATION

Generally, you can eat normally after your surgery. Start with light meals and gradually increase as you can tolerate.



If you need to adjust your diet after your operation, the surgeon and nurse will give you instructions. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask them.

If you have nausea (you feel sick to your stomach), start by drinking clear fluids and gradually increase the amount and change the texture of the foods you eat as you can tolerate them.

**To avoid constipation**, which can be caused by pain medication:

- Eat plenty of fiber (grains, whole-grain bread, fruit, vegetables, etc.).
- Drink 7 to 8 glasses of water a day (unless you have a medical restriction).
- Walking can help with bowel function.



**If, despite these tips, you are unable to have a bowel movement:**

You can use a mild laxative such as Metamucil<sup>®</sup>, Colace<sup>®</sup>, Lax A day<sup>®</sup>

or

Prodiu<sup>®</sup> at a pharmacy. Ask your pharmacist for advice.

**If you have not had a bowel movement for at least 3 days despite these tips, consult a health care professional (family doctor, pharmacist, Info-Santé at 811).**

## ACTIVITIES



### You can drive when:

- You no longer feel dizzy.
- You no longer have pain and you have stopped taking narcotic medications for at least 24 hours.

- Depending on your procedure, you may have to follow certain instructions. The gynecologist or nurse will give you the necessary instructions. Do not hesitate to ask questions.
- You should continue to be active after an operation, but alternate with periods of rest. It is normal to feel tired.
- Pain should not prevent you from doing your daily activities such as dressing, bathing or eating. Take your pain medication if the pain is too severe and at least 30 minutes before doing your activities, if applicable.
- Walking is one of the best exercises. Increase the distance you walk each day and alternate with rest periods. Avoid strenuous exercise, sudden movements or contact sports.
- Before you travel, be sure to consult your gynecologist and your insurance.
- Physical activities should be stopped according to the gynecologist's instructions. You must follow the specific instructions for your operation, if applicable.
- You may go up and down the stairs with the strength in your legs, depending on your tolerance.
- You will be able to do gentle swimming (no fast or abrupt movements) after the vaginal discharge has stopped and the wounds have healed, approximately 4 weeks after the surgery following your visit to the gynecologist.



Avoid sitting for too long to avoid too much blood flow into the pelvic blood vessels. Alternate positions regularly.

## SEXUAL ACTIVITIES

No penetrative sex for 6 weeks after surgery and with the approval of your gynecologist.

### Sexuality after gynecological surgery

Sexuality is an integral part of who we are as a person. It is a way to express our femininity and plays an important role in our health and well-being.

Each of us expresses our sexuality in different ways. Sex involves more than foreplay and the act of sex itself. It encompasses all demonstrations of attraction and affection including play, bonding, intimacy and caressing.

Surgery on the female genitalia can be a source of anxiety about resuming sexual activity. In addition, it is often difficult for women to talk about their sexuality, even if they and their partners are concerned about it. The following explanations are intended to answer questions that women often have following genital surgery.

### What happens when the uterus is removed?

- There is no more menstruation each month.
- Pregnancy is no longer possible.
- There is no change in sexual activity or pleasure.

### What happens when the uterus and both ovaries are removed before menopause?

In addition to the effects mentioned above, removing the ovaries will produce a sudden loss of female hormones. This will result in :

- Hot flashes.
- Increased vaginal dryness and irritation.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Sometimes a decrease in interest in sex.

The intensity of these effects will vary for each woman. Sometimes, following surgery, a woman may not feel like having sex. This is completely normal and should generally be temporary. In addition, if your doctor prescribes hormone therapy to replace the loss of female hormones, these effects will be greatly reduced and possibly eliminated.

### Suggestions for preventing or decreasing vaginal dryness

Vaginal dryness is a problem that affects most women at some point in their lives. Vaginal dryness can cause itching, burning, irritation and pain during normal daytime activities, as well as during sexual intercourse. Vaginal moisturization is important to keep the vaginal tissue supple and to ensure adequate lubrication for intercourse. Use a moisturizing and lubricating vaginal gel such as Replens®, Moistrin® or Astrogly®. These gels restore natural moisture for up to three days after a single application. Do not use petroleum jelly products, as they contain petroleum, which increases vaginal dryness and can cause infections.

### Suggestions for reducing discomfort during penetration

Many women are concerned that the first few encounters after surgery will be painful or uncomfortable. If deep penetration during intercourse causes discomfort, try the position shown in Figure 1. Keep the legs together. Put gel between the thighs. This position makes the vagina feel deeper and reduces discomfort during penetration. Positions where the woman controls the depth and angle of penetration are also preferred (Figure 2).

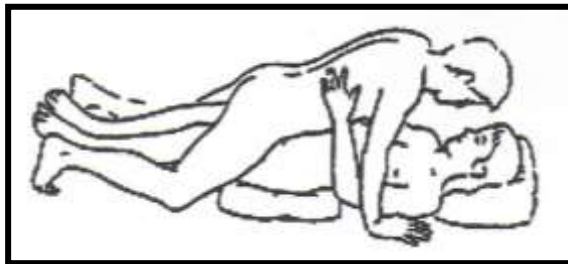


Figure 1



Figure 2

#### Other advice for a better sexual experience

Following surgery, no swimming, douching, vaginal penetration or use of a vaginal vibrator for 6 weeks because the cervix has been removed and there is an incision in the upper vaginal wall.

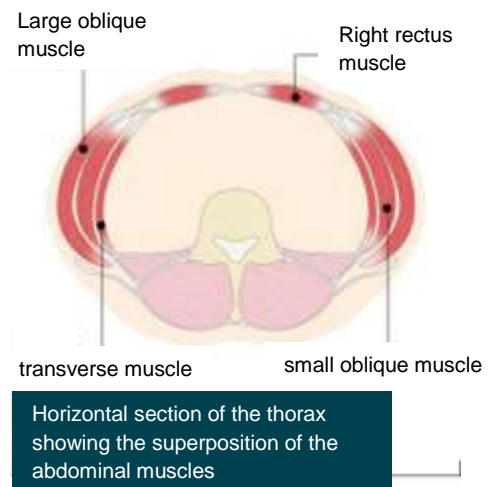
Wait two weeks before beginning external genitalia stimulation. Some women prefer to try the procedure alone to see how their bodies change and respond to the stimulation.

Slight reddish vaginal discharge may be present after vaginal penetration. This is normal and should not be a cause for concern.

Your gynecologist will be able to advise you.

## STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

The abdominal musculature has several layers. In the deep layers, the transversus abdominis is the muscle that is closest to the viscera and when contracted, acts as an abdominal strap. In the intermediate and superficial layers, we find the small and large obliques and the large rectus, which also provide support to the viscera and the spine. They also allow for trunk movement.



The strengthening of the abdominal muscles must be done according to certain principles, in order to optimize recovery and avoid possible discomforts. First, strengthening should always be started from the deep layer to the superficial layer. A second important principle is that a contraction of the pelvic floor muscles must precede and be maintained throughout the abdominal strengthening exercises. To contract the pelvic floor muscles, the instruction: "Hold urine and gas" is applied.

Abdominal strengthening exercises can be started about 1 week after surgery and should be painless. It is suggested that the following order be followed in the weeks following your surgery.

Suggested starting parameters: 5 repetitions at a frequency of 1 to 2 times per day. Then, depending on your tolerance, add another exercise with the same parameters. Depending on your tolerance, gradually increase the number of repetitions to 10.

### Week # 1 : Transverse abdominis (TA)

#### Exercise # 1

- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Breathe in deeply.
- As you exhale, activate the pelvic floor muscles ("hold urine and gas") first, then gently pull in your belly button.
- There should be no movement of the pelvis or rib cage.
- Then release the contraction.

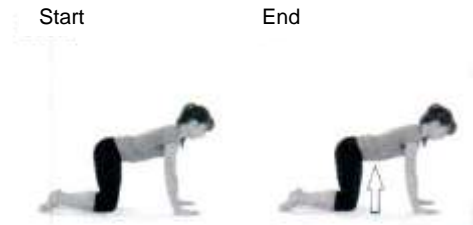
Evolve this exercise by doing it in a sitting position, standing and on all fours.



**Week # :2 : Transverse abdomen (TA) (4 legs)**

**Exercise # 2**

- Position yourself on all fours with your back straight.
- Breathe in deeply.
- During the exhalation, activate the pelvic floor muscles ("Hold urine and gas") first, then gently pull in your belly button.
- There should be no movement of the pelvis or rib cage.
- Then release the contraction.

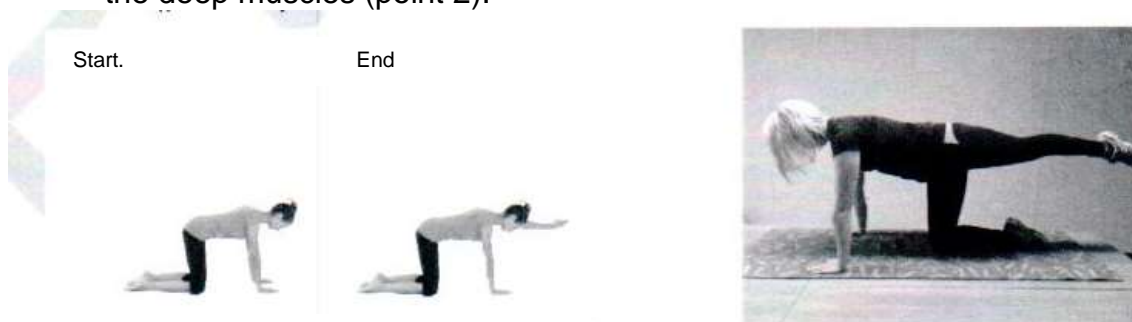


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**Week # :3: Transverse abdominis (TA)  
(4 legs lift one arm and progression lift one leg)**

**Exercises # 3 and # 4**

- Stand on all fours with your back straight.
- Inhale deeply, adding an arm raise (exercise #3) or leg raise (exercise #4) (5 reps on the right and 5 on the left, for 5 seconds.
- On the exhale, activate the pelvic floor muscles ("Hold urine and gas") first, then gently pull in your belly button.
- No movement of the pelvis or rib cage should be observed.
- Then release the contraction.
- Be careful, during these exercises, you should not feel your back digging in. If it does, you can raise your arm or leg lower or make sure you activate the deep muscles (point 2).



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## Week 4: Pelvic tilt (activation of the rectus abdominis)

### Exercises # 5

- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Tilt your pelvis slightly backwards in order to stick your back to the floor.
- Inhale deeply.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Exhale slowly.



## Week #5: 'Resistance without movement of small/large obliques (middle layer)

### Exercises # 6

- On your back with your knees bent.
- Pull in your belly button (as explained in exercise 1).
- Raise your leg to 90 degrees.
- Place your arm on the same side of the raised leg on the inside of the knee.
- During the exhalation, push the leg out and at the same time resist the movement with your leg (no movement should then occur).
- Hold for 5 seconds, then gently release all components of the exercise.

Start.



End



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## Week 6: Half-straightening (straight) and half-crossing (oblique)

### Exercises # 7

- On your back, knees bent.
- Tilt your pelvis slightly backward so that your back is on the floor.
- Pull your belly button in (as explained in exercise 1).
- Lift your head and shoulders to lift your shoulder blades off the floor (keep your chin tucked in and your neck extended throughout the exercise without pulling on your head).
- Hold for 5 seconds, then gently release all components of the exercise.



## Exercises # 8

- On your back, knees bent.
- Tilt your pelvis slightly backward so that your back is on the floor.
- Pull your belly button in (as explained in exercise 1).
- Cross your arms over your chest, tuck your chin in and keep your neck extended.
- Lift your head and shoulders to lift your shoulder blades (Keep your chin tucked and neck extended throughout the exercise without pulling on your head).
- Hold for 5 seconds, then gently release all components of the exercise.



## Week 7: BP (moving leg one at a time)

## Exercises # 9

- On your back, knees bent.
- Pull in your belly button (as explained in exercise # 1)
- Tilt your pelvis (as explained in exercise # 2)
- Raise your left leg to 90°.
- Hold for 5 seconds, during the exhalation, lower your leg, keeping your back still without allowing it to dig in.
- Repeat with the right leg.







## COMPLICATIONS


If you have difficulty breathing :

**Immediately call  
Urgence-santé at 911**



If you have one or more of the following signs or symptoms :

 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Image : Pixabay</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fever (38.5 °C or 101 °F or higher) for more than 24 hours</b></p>	<p>Your pain increases and is not relieved by medication.</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Image : bloggerbin56.blogspot.com</p>
 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Image : flickr</p> <p>You have cramps or constant pain in your calf.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Signs of surgical site infection:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Redness.</li> <li>➤ Pain.</li> <li>➤ Swelling.</li> <li>➤ Yellowish or greenish discharge.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Malodorous (foul-smelling) vaginal discharge.</li> <li>3. Burning while urinating (burning sensation when urinating). Frequent need to urinate or the feeling of not emptying the bladder.</li> <li>4. Significant vaginal bleeding: well soaked sanitary napkin requiring an hourly change.</li> </ol>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Image : Pixabay</p>



**Contactez une infirmière d'info-Santé au 811 en tout temps (24h/24)**

**Pour toutes autres questions, contactez l'une des ressources mentionnées à la page suivante.**

## RESOURCES



Pour toute urgence, composez le 911.  
Pour des conseils de santé, composez le 811.

24 heures sur 24, 7 jours sur 7

### Outpatient clinics

Preadmission (preoperative only) .....	450 975-5566
CICL (Gyneco-oncology) .....	450 975-5359
Gynecology .....	450 975-5563

### Private offices of Gynecologist surgeons in Laval

Address : 129, Boulevard de la Concorde Ouest, Laval (Québec) ..... 450 668-3250

### CLSC - Laval area

Accueil première ligne.....	450 627-2530, ext. 64922
CLSC des Mille-Îles .....	450 661-2572
CLSC du Ruisseau-Papineau .....	450 682-5690
CLSC et CHSLD Sainte-Rose.....	450 622-5110
CLSC de l'Ouest de l'île .....	450 627-2530
CLSC et CHSLD Idola-Saint-Jean .....	450 668-1803

### Laurentian area

Centre intégré de santé et de service sociaux des Laurentides :

Thérèse de Blainville .....	450 433-2777
Des sommets .....	819 324-4000
St-Jérôme.....	450 432-2777
Pays d'en haut .....	450 229-6601
Jean-Olivier Chénier.....	450 433-2777
Argenteuil .....	450 562-3761
Antoine Labelle .....	819 275-2118

### Lanaudière area

Lanaudière Sud .....	450 654-2572
Lanaudière Nord .....	450 839-3864

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

McGill University Health Centre. Office of Patient Education. (2013). *Preparation guide for laparoscopic total hysterectomy surgery.*





**Centre intégré  
de santé  
et de services sociaux  
de Laval**

**Québec** 

Septembre 2022  
Direction des services professionnels  
62-100-350