

Going Home After Your Vaginoplasty Operation – Information for patients leaflet

This leaflet has been provided to help you care for yourself at home after your Vaginoplasty operation.

On the day of your discharge home from hospital

You will already have your 2 Perspex ‘friends’ (dilators). We will also give you:

Betadine pessaries, which you will need to place high in the vagina once a week for 10 weeks. The best way to do this is to dilate using a small dilator, before placing a pessary on your finger and inserting it into your vaginal opening. You should then use a larger dilator to push the pessary high into the vagina.

Aquagel, for lubrication. You can also use KY Jelly, which is available from most chemists.

Voltarol, or similar pain killers.

Douche Kit, pour 2 capfuls of the Betadine into the bellows and top up with mains tap water. Screw the nozzle on, insert into your vagina and squeeze. You should do this every day.

The nursing staff or Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) will go through the above with you and answer any questions you may have before you go home. Please remember that you will feel tired the first two weeks you are at home and therefore it is good to have support from family and friends during this time.

Home Routine

Dilation

You should do this 3 times a day for the next two months (5 minutes with the small dilator, then 10 minutes with the large one).

Due to the amount of times you are dilating, you may find that the bottom ends of your wounds become red and sore. Make sure that you keep the areas clean and dry and they will eventually heal.

About 2 months after your operation, if it is easy to get the dilators in, you can reduce to dilating twice a day by dropping the ‘lunchtime’ session. However, if it is difficult to get the dilators in, continue using them 3 times a day for another 2 weeks before you try reducing frequency again.

Normally, you should be able to get down to 1 or 2 dilations per week by 6 – 9 months after surgery and continue at that frequency indefinitely.

Douching

You should do this daily for 6 weeks using 2 capfuls of Betadine diluted with normal tap water. After that, use tap water on its own. Sometimes, you can become sensitive to the Betadine. If this happens, try douching just with water.

Hormones

Start taking these again 2 weeks after you return home. You will need a lower dose, typically 1/3 – 1/2 of the dose you were taking before surgery.

After 1 month of restarting your hormones, make an appointment with your GP to have your blood tested. This is to make sure that the level of hormones is right for you and to check that there are no side effects.

If there are any problems, you should ask to see Dr Seal, the GIC endocrinologist.

Bathing

Bath or shower as often as you like, but ideally you should aim to do this twice a day for the first week or so. Make sure that you use a clean towel to pat your wound dry. You should do this until your wound is fully healed.

Sex

Avoid having full penetrative vaginal sex for at least 3 months after your operation, then make sure that you start carefully and gently!

Is there anything I need to watch out for at home?

We do hope that you will have no problems after your discharge home from hospital.

It is common to have a small amount of superficial infection, which usually clears up with careful hygiene. However, if you experience an increase odour, or are worried about anything, you should:

Call the CNS on her mobile (0790 685 9811) or via the hospital switchboard (dial 020 8846 1234 and ask for bleep 5996). She is normally available during the day, Monday – Friday. If the voicemail is on, please leave a message and she will return your call.

Contact your GP, who should be able to deal with any minor infections or problems. S/he can always contact us for advice.

Telephone the ward you were on via the hospital switchboard on 020 8846 1234. The nurses have considerable experience of this operation and are often able to give advice and reassurance.

Call the Gender team's secretary on 020 383 0160. She can take a message, discuss your concerns with one of the team and make a clinic appointment for you if necessary.

In an emergency, go to your nearest Accident & Emergency (Casualty) Department. Take this leaflet with you as it will have our contact telephone numbers for them to use.

Take care, good luck and remember to contact the CNS if you have any queries or concerns