

## **Post-Operative Instructions**

### **Exploratory Laparotomy**

*Sarpy County OB/GYN, P.C.*

An exploratory laparotomy is a surgical procedure that entails making an abdominal incision and “exploring” the abdomen. There are many indications for performing an exploratory laparotomy. Please discuss this with your doctor. Your doctor will also review with you in detail the risks/benefits of performing this procedure.

1. Remember this is a major abdominal surgical procedure. It will take from 6-8 weeks to feel completely recovered. This is normal.
2. As you resume your usual activities, expect to tire easily. It is okay to become tired, but avoid becoming exhausted.
3. It is normal to have a light pink discharge for up to 2 weeks.
4. Limit your activities for 4-6 weeks:
  - a. No lifting of more than 5 to 10 lbs.
  - b. No vacuuming
  - c. No strenuous activities or exercises
  - d. No driving for 2 weeks (you may ride in a car for a short trip)
  - e. Walk up and down steps one step at a time.
5. Regular walks are encouraged
6. Showers are OK. It is fine to get water on your incision. Blot your incision dry with a towel afterwards.
7. Wear loose clothing and cotton underwear for comfort.
8. There may be a slight pink color to the incision and occasional clear to light yellow drainage. The drainage should be minimal.
9. A hard ridge should form along the incision. As it heals, the ridge will recede gradually.
10. You may use an electric heating pad, a heat lamp or a warm compress to relieve incisional pain.
11. Nothing in the vagina (no sex, tampons, or douching) until your follow up exam reveals complete healing (usually in 6 weeks).
12. You may do light housework as tolerated: washing dishes help with cooking, light cleaning such as dusting.
13. Resume your medications as ordered.
14. Report any of the following:
  - a. Foul smelling drainage from the vagina, or an increase in vaginal bleeding
  - b. Fever by thermometer over 101 degrees F within 24-48 hours
  - c. New symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, constipation, abdominal swelling or severe pain
  - d. Inability to urinate
  - e. Redness, pus, swelling, or more than usual tenderness from incision
15. For after hours, call: 898-8500.
16. First post-operative check is usually at 2 weeks. A second and final one usually occurs 6 weeks from when surgery was performed.