

# Suggestions From Hysterectomy Patients

"I want to thank all the women who contributed their wonderful suggestions to this list." – Hope

## Before the procedure:

Research what treatments are available. Ask the doctor how the hysterectomy will be performed – Abdominal, Vaginal, Laparoscopic, da Vinci Robotic. Ask if they are skilled at all the methods and why they recommend one method over another. Refer to '[Uterine Fibroid Treatments Guide](#)'.

Ask if the doctor recommends removing your ovaries and why. Refer to web site URL [www.doctorsinfoweb.com/women/ovary-research.htm](http://www.doctorsinfoweb.com/women/ovary-research.htm). Go for a second and third opinion (Gynecologist and/or Interventional Radiologist). Refer to '[Patient Discussion Guide](#)' and '[Hysterectomy Only Questions](#)'.

Investigate what your insurance policy will cover. How long will you be in the hospital? Check what your prescription card will cover concerning 'hormone replacement'.

It is a good idea to research 'hormone replacement' especially if the ovaries are going to be removed. (Research if you need to be on it, what type, why you would or wouldn't need it, and for how long. Hormone replacement is based on an individual basis.)

**FSH (Follicle-Stimulating Hormone) test.** Dr. Parker explains FSH as follows: "If a woman is not having periods, the diagnosis of menopause is usually clear. If they are having irregular periods, they are probably in perimenopause and their hormones (and hormone levels including FSH) may bounce around for years before menopause. Even an abnormal level would not convince me to recommend removing ovaries unless there was a family history of ovarian cancer."

House chores are done for several weeks. (This includes any outside projects that may require lifting.)

Get a rocker/recliner or something comfortable to sit or lay on when you come home from the hospital.

What pre-op tests will be done and when do you have to go to the hospital to do them?

Practice deep nose breathing exercises before the procedure. These exercises are used to help eliminate the anesthesia in the lungs after the hysterectomy surgery.

Don't take vitamins or herbal sport drinks before the surgery without consulting your doctor (certain vitamins, herbs, etc. can cause more bleeding).

Ask about prescription medications you may be taking, if you need to stop it and how long before the surgery.

Pack some personal items (perfume, soap, brush, make-up, toothpaste, etc.) magazines and books to read may be helpful.

### **At the hospital:**

**Make sure the doctors/staff are aware of your allergic reactions to medications.**

**Bring along the prescription medications that you take daily. Inform the personnel at the hospital that you have medications with you and ask when you are allowed to take them.**

**Bring along your own Depends, pads, or bladder control pads.**

**Bring along your own sleepwear and comfortable slippers/shoes to walk in.**

**Some of the women said they experienced a little nausea or not feeling like eating a meal. Crackers, soup, and/or water may ease this *temporary* situation.**

**Ask about hormones in the hospital (discuss this at your doctor consultation before the surgery). You may find new studies will be different than what you previously thought.**

**Continue taking deep breaths, which will help you get rid of the anesthesia from your lungs. (You may have something to breathe into, and try to use it as often as recommended.)**

**You may have leggings put on you to help with blood clots.**

**Pain medication may be administered in an IV or through a Patient Controlled Analgesia pump (PCA). (Example: Morphine) Some medication may be administered orally.**

**Try walking around in the room or hallways as much as possible.**

**A plush stuff animal or pillow to hold on to when you cough.**

### **Before leaving the hospital:**

**Wear loose clothes - elastic or zippers may irritate the abdomen or incision.**

**Get the prescriptions filled before being released. Have the person helping you do this before you are released from the hospital, if possible.**

**Make sure the person with you understands all the directions the doctor gives you. Don't be afraid to ask to have something repeated if you don't understand the instructions.**

**Make sure you have the doctor's answering service and/or emergency phone numbers in case you have a question or concern.**

Ask when you can resume taking the vitamins and sport drinks, etc.

What are the restrictions for the following: exercise, sex, lifting, vacuuming/cleaning, driving the car, walking, steps, medications, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Absence from work (minimum to maximum timeframes)? Will you have to work half days when you first go back to work? (Depends on what kind of work you do – could be a longer recovery period.)

Doctor appointment to take out the staples, etc. (Depending on the procedure, stitches may be used that will dissolve by themselves.)

Ask **your doctor** about a stool softener (examples: Surfak or Colace) for gas and constipation – this can be VERY painful. Watch what foods you eat concerning gas/constipation. Walking can help with this problem.

Ask about taking Iron and Vitamin C - studies show that this reduces fatigue after surgery.

## Recovery:

Expect to be tired at times after the surgery and during the recovery period. Listen to your body when it tells you to take a break – DON'T overdo.

Fleet enema to help bowel movement. **Talk to your doctor if you have problems with your bowels.**

Eat small portions of food. You may experience a loss of appetite for a little while.

Drink lots of fluids.

Be prepared to have to use pain medication. Make sure you have a prescription and a supply of pain medication. **Ask your doctor** what would be a good over-the-counter medication to use.

If it is possible, it is good to have someone with you the first week after coming home from the surgery. Have someone with you to help you into the shower.

Keep a calendar diary of what you are experiencing or want to ask your doctor.

**Note:** When you have a question, call your doctor for instructions.

Hope For Fibroids Organization, web site URL [www.hopeforfibroids.org](http://www.hopeforfibroids.org).

Contact Information: [hope@hopeforfibroids.org](mailto:hope@hopeforfibroids.org).

Patient Brochures and Doctor Finder Information: [www.hopeforfibroids.org/questionstoask.html](http://www.hopeforfibroids.org/questionstoask.html)