

Day surgery: going home after your vulvar surgery



the women's
the royal women's hospital

Recovering from your vulvar surgery will take some time and it's important to take care of yourself during this period. This information will help you in your recovery.

Looking after yourself

For the first 24 hours

Make sure you:

- get plenty of rest, no heavy lifting, housework, or cooking
- do not drive a car
- do not drink alcohol
- do not operate machinery or electrical appliances
- do not sign any legal documents.

An icepack or packet of frozen peas wrapped in cloth placed on your vulva, may help to ease your pain.

Your surgery

Surgery to the vulva is usually done under general anaesthesia (while you are asleep) to remove diseased skin or chronic painful areas. Occasionally, small lesions can be removed under local anaesthesia (while you are awake) in our Day Surgery Unit. Your care after surgery is similar whether the procedure is done under general anaesthesia or local anaesthesia.

Keeping your vulva clean and dry

For five days after your surgery, have a salt bath at least once a day. This keeps your wound clean and helps to stop infection. If you have a bathtub, half-fill it with warm water and add up to two handfuls of cheap cooking salt. Sit in the tub for about 20 minutes. If you find this soothing, you can repeat it later in the day. If you don't have a bath, try using a plastic basin instead. After your bath, it is important to make sure your vulva is dry. A hairdryer on a low or medium setting can help with this.

Managing your pain

When you leave the hospital, you will be given medicine to help relieve your pain. Please use this as needed. Most pain killers can cause constipation. To avoid this, drink at least 1.5 litres of fluids and eat a high-fibre diet. Taking fibre supplements can also assist.

Stitches used in vulvar surgery are dissolvable and they do not need to be removed. It is important to know that your stitches may take up to four weeks before they fall out. This is quite normal.

If you have a sudden increase in pain or swelling in the area or any significant bleeding from your wound, please go to your nearest Emergency Department. If the bleeding is minor use your finger and apply pressure to the bleeding point for about 10 minutes. This usually helps to stop minor bleeding. If the bleeding continues, contact your local doctor (GP) or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

Your next appointment

It is important that you see a doctor in our Vulvar Disorders Clinic after your surgery. A follow-up appointment will be organised for 8-12 weeks after surgery. Details about your appointment will be sent to you by mail. Please make sure you keep this appointment so we can check on your progress following surgery and plan any future follow-up reviews.

Dr R. Pagano

Disclaimer: This fact sheet provides general information only. For specific advice about your healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this fact sheet instead of seeing a health professional. If you require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department. © The Royal Women's Hospital 2022