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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Gynecology Service: What You Should Know About Going Home

This information will help you get ready to leave the hospital after your gynecologic surgery or procedure.

## When You Will Leave the Hospital

You'll be ready to leave the hospital when:

- Your stomach makes sounds showing that your bowels are working as they normally do. You don't need to have a bowel movement before you're discharged.
- You're able to eat solid food. It may take several weeks for your appetite to be the same as it was before your surgery. You must be able to eat some solid foods before you leave the hospital.
- You're not in too much pain. You may have some discomfort after surgery, but your doctor will prescribe you pain medication to help. The medication should make you comfortable enough to recover at home.
- You're able to get up and walk. Some people may need to see a physical therapist (PT) to help with their recovery. Others may need to go to a rehabilitation facility or nursing home setting.

## Getting Ready to Leave the Hospital

Your healthcare provider will let you know what day you're likely to be discharged from the hospital. Most people are discharged by 11:00 AM.

Your incisions (surgical cuts) may be closed with staples. If you go home before the staples are removed, your doctor or nurse will tell you when to make an appointment to have them taken out.

Some people may go home with:

- A Foley® catheter (a thin, flexible tube) to drain urine (pee) from their bladder
- A drain in their abdomen (belly)
- An open wound
- An ostomy (opening made in the wall of their abdomen to drain urine or stool)

If you go home with any of these, your nurse will teach you and your caregiver how to care for them. If you need any supplies, your doctor will order them for you. A visiting nurse may come to your home, if needed.

Your doctor will tell you when the drain or catheter will be removed and an appointment will be scheduled for you.

You'll get a prescription for medication, instructions on how to care for your incisions, and phone numbers where you can reach your doctor or nurse. Please keep this information in a safe place.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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Gynecology Service: What You Should Know About Going Home - Last updated on July 24, 2019

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