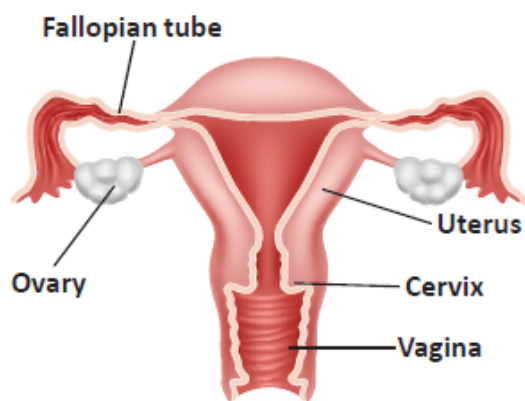




## Gynecological surgery guide



## Female Reproductive System



### What is gynecological surgery?

Gynecological surgery is surgery of the female reproductive system. This includes the vagina, fallopian tubes, ovaries, and uterus.

### What are the most common surgeries?

- Hysterectomy - removal of the uterus
- Oophorectomy - removal of the ovaries
- Salpingectomy - removal of the fallopian tubes
- Myomectomy - removal of fibroids in or around the uterus (uterus is not removed)

### How is surgery done?

There are 3 main ways gynecological surgery is performed. Your surgeon will talk with you about what is best for you.

- Minimally invasive surgery
  - small incisions are made on the abdomen (belly)
- Open surgery
  - a large incision (cut) is made in the abdomen
- Vaginal surgery
  - surgery is performed mostly through the vagina

## Prepare: Getting ready for your surgery


### Today

- ☐ Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids, especially water, every day before surgery. 
- ☐ Be active for at least 15 to 20 minutes each day. 
- ☐ Limit alcohol like beer, wine, and liquor — stop drinking alcohol 24 hours (1 day) before surgery.
- ☐ Stop smoking. 
- ☐ If you have diabetes, work with your healthcare team to get blood sugar well controlled.
- ☐ Visit [BSWHealth.com/specialties/surgical-services](https://www.bswhealth.com/specialties/surgical-services) for more information.

### Did you know?

Drinking fluids, especially water, and eating healthy foods before surgery will help your body heal after surgery.

### Day before surgery

- ☐ Do not drink alcohol.
- ☐ Take off all jewelry including rings and piercings — leave valuables at home.
- ☐ Bathe with antiseptic skin cleanser (chlorhexidine gluconate). Wash your entire body except your face, hair, and genital area with the antiseptic skin cleanser. 

- **Do NOT** shave
- **Do NOT** use lotions
- **Do NOT** put on make-up or perfumes

### Did you know?

Following instructions for bathing before surgery helps prevent infection after surgery.

### Morning of surgery

- ☐ Bathe with antiseptic skin cleanser (chlorhexidine gluconate). Wash your entire body except your face, hair, and genital area with the antiseptic skin cleanser. 
- ☐ Stop eating all solid food 8 hours before surgery.
- ☐ Drink only clear liquids up to 2 hours before surgery. 
- ☐ The special pre-surgery drink should be the last drink you have if it was given to you. Finish it at \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Arrive at the hospital at \_\_\_\_\_

- **Do NOT** shave
- **Do NOT** use lotions
- **Do NOT** put on make-up or perfumes



#### Did you know?

Drinking clear liquids up to 2 hours before surgery is safe and good for your body. This includes water, sports drinks, clear juice, coffee and tea without milk or cream, Popsicles®, Jell-O®, and the special pre-surgery drink.





## Recover: What to expect as you start your recovery


### Surgery day

- ☐ Start managing pain with medicine taken by mouth. 
- ☐ Drink liquids.
- ☐ Eat if able.
- ☐ Use incentive spirometer every hour while awake.
- ☐ Cough and deep breathe.
- ☐ Spend time out of bed.
- ☐ Start walking. 

### Day AFTER surgery and beyond

- ☐ Manage pain with medicine taken by mouth.
- ☐ Drink 6 to 8 glasses of liquids. 
- ☐ Eat solid food.
- ☐ Sit up for all meals.
- ☐ Use incentive spirometer every hour while awake.
- ☐ Cough and deep breathe.
- ☐ Spend at least 4 hours out of bed.
- ☐ Walk in the halls at least 4 times. 

### Before going home, you will need to:

- ☐ Walk safely in the halls.
- ☐ Eat and drink without nausea or vomiting.
- ☐ Manage pain with medicine taken by mouth.
- ☐ Be able to urinate (pee) without problems.
- ☐ Show signs your bowels are working.
- ☐ Know about new prescriptions.
- ☐ Know when your follow-up visit is scheduled. 



## Resume: What to expect when going home

### Pain management

- ☐ It is normal to have some pain while you are healing.
- ☐ Follow medicine instructions given to you by your healthcare team.
- ☐ Use ice packs, deep breathing, walking, and distractions like music to help with pain management.



### Drinking

- ☐ Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water every day to stay hydrated.
- ☐ Watch for signs of dehydration, including being overly tired, having a dry mouth, feeling dizzy, having nausea, having dark-colored urine (pee), or urinating less than normal.
- ☐ Drink water if you have any signs of dehydration. If you do not get better after drinking water, call your healthcare team.



### Eating

- ☐ Eat healthy foods like cooked vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and proteins like lean meats and chicken.



### Activity

- ☐ Increase what you do each day to get back to your regular activities.
- ☐ Sit up for all meals.
- ☐ Spend at least 6 to 8 hours out of bed each day.
- ☐ Walk for 15 minutes 4 to 6 times during the day.
- ☐ Rest when you feel tired.
- ☐ Do NOT lift more than 10 pounds until your healthcare team says you can.
- ☐ Ask your healthcare team when you can start activities like jogging, cycling, and lifting weights.



### Driving

- ☐ Do NOT drive if you are taking opioid medicine.
- ☐ You must be able to wear a seatbelt and turn your body to see for safe driving.
- ☐ Ask your healthcare team when it is safe for you to drive.

### Returning to work

- ☐ Talk with your healthcare team to decide what is best for you. Going back to work depends on the type of work you do.
- ☐ Slowly increase hours you work.

## What to expect at home

### The following things are normal:

#### Incision

- Redness right around the incision
- Small amount of drainage around the incision

#### Vaginal bleeding

- Small amount of bleeding or spotting any time during the first 3 weeks after surgery. It should not be enough to soak a pad in 1 hour.
- Increased bleeding with increased activity

#### Energy level

- Feeling more tired than normal

Some women go home with a urinary catheter that is removed at a follow-up visit. Swelling after surgery can make it hard to urinate (pee).

### Incision care

- Wash the area gently with warm, soapy water every day in the shower.
- Pat the area dry with a clean towel.
- If your incision is draining, cover it with a dry gauze pad and medical tape or with an adhesive bandage (e.g. Band-aid®) – leave your incision uncovered if it is not draining.
- If you have strips of tape on your incision, leave the tape on until it falls off.
- If you have staples at your incision, they will be removed at your follow-up visit 7 to 14 days after surgery.
- If you have clear surgical glue on your incision, it will fall off in 10 to 14 days.

### While you are healing:

- **Do NOT** put anything in your vagina until your healthcare team says it is okay.
- **Do NOT** have sex until your healthcare team says it is okay.
- **Do NOT** use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol on your incision.
- **Do NOT** soak in a bath or get in a pool until at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- **Do NOT** put ointments, creams, or oils on your incision for 6 weeks.

### Who and when to call for problems

Call your surgeon's office for:

- Pain that is not getting better or gets worse
- Fever over 100.4° F
- Incision opens up or is bleeding
- Incision becomes redder, hard, or has pus in it
- Vaginal discharge that smells very bad
- Passing blood clots that are larger than 2 inches
- Urine (pee) is cloudy or smells very bad
- Difficulty urinating (pee'ing)
- Not able to have a bowel movement for 3 days
- Nausea or vomiting that does not stop
- Not getting better as expected

### Call 911 for:

- Passing out
- Sudden chest pain
- Shortness of breath that is getting worse

For more information please go to:  
[BSWHealth.com/specialties/surgical-services](https://www.bswhealth.com/specialties/surgical-services)



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