

# Caring for Yourself After Hysterectomy



After you recover from your hysterectomy, you may feel better than you have in a long time. An active, healthy lifestyle and regular medical care can help you continue to feel good.



## Being intimate

After a hysterectomy, sex can be as pleasurable as it was before. Follow your surgeon's directions on when you can resume having sex. This is usually within 4 to 8 weeks after the procedure. Other types of sexual activity may be possible sooner. If you have vaginal dryness during sex, use a lubricant. Be aware that a hysterectomy prevents pregnancy. But it doesn't protect you against sexually transmitted infections. If you have any concerns, discuss them with your partner and your healthcare provider.

## Being aware of your emotions

After a hysterectomy, you may feel relieved to be free of symptoms. You may also feel sad about the changes in your body. If your ovaries were removed, you may go through some natural mood swings as your hormones adjust. Note how you are feeling from day to day. Talk to your healthcare provider if you're concerned about emotions you are feeling.

## Ongoing healthcare

Regular physical exams help to keep your general health and well-being on track:

- You will continue to need routine breast exams and pelvic exams. This includes Pap tests if you still have a cervix or if you have a history of certain types of dysplasia or cervical cancer.
- If you're taking hormone therapy, you will need follow-up visits with your healthcare provider to fine-tune your dosage.

## **What to know about hormone therapy**

Hormone therapy (HT) is medicine to replace the hormones made by your ovaries. It may be advised if your ovaries are removed, and you have not yet gone through natural menopause. HT helps decrease hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and other symptoms of menopause. It may help reduce bone loss and reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis. But HT may also increase the risk of certain types of health problems in some women. Discuss the pros and cons of HT with your healthcare provider.

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