

When can I resume sexual activity?

You can resume sexual activity in about six weeks.

When can I go back to work?

This depends on your job. Most women return after eight weeks but if your job is strenuous or involves heavy lifting it may take longer.

What happens at my follow-up visit?

Your check up is usually between six to eight weeks after the operation. Your doctors will examine you to make sure all is well. It also gives you the opportunity to discuss any further information.

Further information

If you have further questions or concerns about your operation, please contact:

Gynaecology Outpatients Department
The Royal London Hospital

Tel: 0203 594 1585

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

If you need general information or advice about Trust services, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 3594 2040 or visit www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/pals. Alternatively please contact staff who are providing your care if you require clinical advice.

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Patient information

Sacrocolpopexy



Introduction

This leaflet is designed to explain sacrocolpopexy, a surgical procedure to cure a condition called vault prolapse, where the upper part of the vagina drops downwards after a hysterectomy.

How does it work?

The procedure is designed to restore the vagina to its normal positioning and function. A small cut is made in the lower part of the abdomen just below the pubic hairline. Through the cut, the highest point of the vagina is identified, lifted and then attached with a mesh to the sacrum, which is a bone in the lower part of the back, this procedure is done after taking a written consent and usually takes one to two hours.

What type of anesthesia will be used?

You will be put to sleep for the operation using a general anaesthetic.

What happens in hospital?

You will be admitted to hospital on the day of your operation or occasionally a day before. If the operation is in the morning please do not eat or drink after midnight. If the operation is in the afternoon, you may have your breakfast at 6 am but nothing after that.

How long will I stay in hospital?

Most women will stay in hospital between three to five days.

What happens after the operation?

When you wake up from the operation there may be some pain and discomfort and regular pain relief will be given to you by the nursing staff.

You may be offered patient controlled analgesia (PCA), which will allow you to control your own pain relief. If you feel sick, nursing staff can give you an injection to treat this. A drip will be placed in your arm following surgery to provide fluids until you are able to drink normally.

You may have a drain in the wound which is removed on the first and second day following surgery. You will also have a catheter (tube) placed in your bladder. This is usually removed on the second day after the operation. A bladder scanner will be used to make sure that you are emptying your bladder fully.

Your doctor will see you the same evening or the next morning to explain how the operation went. You will be given a special pair of white stockings

and also an injection of Heparin every day until you are fully mobile. Both of these will reduce the risk of thrombosis (clots in the blood vessels of legs or lungs)

A physiotherapist will teach you breathing and leg exercises. You will be able to walk about and attend to your personal hygiene on the first or second day. The wound stitches or staples are removed on the fifth day following surgery by the practice nurse either at your GP surgery or at the walk-in centre. If necessary, arrangements will be made for a district nurse to visit you at home. This will be discussed with you prior to discharge.

What are the success rates of the operation?

Sacrocolpopexy has an 80-90 % success rate.

What are the risks of the surgery?

- As with all operations, there is a small risk of bleeding, wound infection or blood clots in the lungs/legs.
- Very occasionally, other organs may be damaged including bladder, ureter or bowel
- You may have difficulty emptying your bladder following surgery. A small number of women also develop new stress or urge urinary incontinence.
- There is a 1-3% risk of mesh erosion, which can cause discomfort and excessive vaginal discharge due to a piece of the mesh being exposed in the vagina. The eroded part of the mesh will then need to be removed.

What can I do when I go home?

You can gradually resume your household routine but do not overtire yourself. It is important you avoid heavy lifting. You should be able to return to your normal activities after 6 weeks. We advise all our patient to continue with long term regular pelvic floor exercises.

When can I drive?

Driving should be avoided for the first three to four weeks. The abdominal wound may still be painful and tender and it might be difficult to perform an emergency stop. You will need to check with your insurance company.