

# Cone Biopsy: What to Expect at Home

## Your Recovery

After your surgery, it is normal to feel tired for a couple days. You may have some pain or cramps in your lower belly for several days. Usually over-the-counter pain medicines, such as ibuprofen, are enough to help with the pain.

After a cone biopsy, you will probably be able to go back to work or your normal routine in about 1 or 2 days.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

### Activity

- Rest when you feel tired. Getting enough sleep will help you recover.
- Try to walk each day. Walking boosts blood flow and helps prevent pneumonia and constipation.
- You may shower 24 to 48 hours after surgery, if your doctor okays it. Do not take a bath for the first 2 weeks, or until your doctor tells you it is okay.
- You will have some light vaginal bleeding or discharge. This usually lasts for up to a week or two after surgery. Wear sanitary pads if needed. Do not douche or use tampons.
- You will probably need to take 1 or 2 days off work. It depends on the type of work you do and how you feel.
- Do not have sex or place anything in your vagina for 4 to 6 weeks after surgery, or until your doctor tells you it is okay.

### Diet

- You can eat your normal diet. If your stomach is upset, try bland, low-fat foods like plain rice, broiled chicken, toast, and yogurt.
- Drink plenty of fluids (unless your doctor tells you not to).
- You may notice that your bowel movements are not regular right after your surgery. This is common. Try to avoid constipation and straining with bowel movements. You may want to take a fiber supplement every day. If you have not had a bowel movement after a couple of days, ask your doctor about taking a mild laxative.

### Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when you can restart your medicines. He or she will also give you instructions about taking any new medicines.
- If you take aspirin or some other blood thinner, ask your doctor if and when to start taking it again. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
  - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
  - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:
  - Take your medicine after meals (unless your doctor tells you not to).
  - Ask your doctor for a different pain medicine.
- If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.

### Other instructions

- If you have cramps after your surgery, try placing a hot water bottle or heating pad on your lower belly.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

### When should you call for help?

Call anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have chest pain, are short of breath, or cough up blood.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have bright red vaginal bleeding that soaks one or more pads in an hour, or you have large clots.
- You have vaginal discharge that has increased in amount or smells bad.

- You are sick to your stomach or cannot drink fluids.
- You have pain that does not get better after you take pain medicine.
- You have signs of infection, such as:
  - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
  - A fever.
- You have signs of a blood clot in your leg (called a deep vein thrombosis), such as:
  - Pain in your calf, back of the knee, thigh, or groin.
  - Redness or swelling in your leg or groin.
- You cannot pass stools or gas.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

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