



Useful tips for going into hospital for prophylactic hysterectomy (oophorectomy)

In Hospital

- Comfortable nightwear (easy access to check on surgery site). You might just want to stay in your hospital gown as you probably won't be in hospital for long.
- Slippers (easy to slip on).
- Dressing gown for when you are up and about.
- Big pants (soft cotton waisted) so nothing rubs on your scars.
- Hair bands (if hair is long) to tie back in theatre – make sure NO metal is present on band.
- Take rings off as fingers may well swell with drip in post-surgery – don't leave jewellery at hospital
- Comfy clothes to travel home in – ie, tracksuit bottoms and baggy tee-shirt. Also a cushion/small pillow to place in between you and car seatbelt to stop seatbelt from rubbing on your tummy.
- Cartons of drink, ie, apple juice (good fibre) and a bottle of squash and a sports bottle.
- Snacks – you may get bored of hospital food, ie, dry biscuits, crackers, digestives, cereal biscuits, mints, etc.
- The usual toiletries – nice to have your own hand towel, flannel, toothbrush and paste, Vaseline for dry lips, face cream, hairbrush, roll-on deodorant and a little perfume if you feel like wearing it.

- Mobile & Charger – lovely to receive texts off friends and family even if you don't feel like replying.
- Try and get up as soon as you can – keep wriggling and flexing your feet in bed as this will help prevent the possibility of a deep vein thrombosis.
- Don't be scared to ask for more pain relief if you need it – don't suffer unnecessarily. You may have an epidural or spinal in place to help with pain relief. Essential for first night!
- You are likely to have a catheter in place for the first night. It isn't particularly pleasant, but is essential initially. This should come out the following day.
- Take trashy magazines in to read, nothing too serious. You may not want to read but may want to glance at them if you are bored.
- Download audio-books and some TV on I Player to watch. Remember to take headphones.
- Take in a small amount of cash for newspapers, etc if you want to.
- Take a photo of your children/family in to make you smile and look forward to getting home (if it doesn't upset you).

At Home

- Wear support stockings that the hospital should give you – white post-surgery stockings which help prevent clots – check how long you should wear them for (I wore mine for a couple of weeks – ask for a couple of pairs so you can have one clean pair and one pair on).
- Comfy clothes.
- When sitting, try and put your feet up and keep wriggling those feet when you think about it.
- You may experience shoulder pain a few days after surgery. This is caused by gas which has been put into your tummy to make surgery easier. Also you may get pain in your stomach, again due to the gas which is trying to make its way out! Peppermint tea is good for this.
- Ask a friend/partner to help wash your hair as it may be uncomfortable stretching

up to wash and dry it (trip to hairdresser's for a treat just to get it washed and dried when you feel up to it).

- Use online shopping, if possible, quick and easy and delivered to the door – make sure someone is at home to put food away for you.
- Don't invite too many visitors straight away – you will just be glad to get home to the family/friends and will want some time with them.
- If anyone asks if they can help, say 'yes'. Difficult to do, but take them up on offers, ie, cleaning the bathroom, changing beds, ironing school uniform or hoovering – things you should not do for a while.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Get up and walk around a little and often – keep circulation going.
- Don't worry about the state of the house – there will be plenty of time to sort it out later on.
- Keep meals simple, nothing fancy, easy and quick for partner or friends to cook – good to plan a menu for the first couple of weeks and to stock up the freezer.
- Aim for a goal in a realistic time period – meeting up for a coffee with a friend or two in town – something to strive for and look forward to later on.
- Keep on top of any pain – check which pain killers to use as there is no point in suffering – you don't want the children to see you uncomfortable.
- Look forward to a happy and healthy future – a lovely summer holiday.
- Have plenty of rest and take a nap when the children are at nursery/school if you need it – your body will be repairing itself and you need to rest.
- Make sure you have the Clinical Nurse Specialist's number in your phone so you always have a point of contact when you get home. They will redirect you to the right people if necessary. Call them to check any worries out, don't just sit there worrying.
- A pillow placed between your legs in bed might help take some pressure off your body when you are on your side. You might feel more comfortable sleeping on your back initially though.

