

# Urethral Sling Surgery for Stress Incontinence: Returning Home

Recovering after urethral sling surgery takes time.

It can help to know what to expect and how you can help your body recover.

For the first few days after surgery, you may feel sore or have some pain or cramping in your lower belly.

Taking pain medicines as your doctor prescribes can help.

At first, you may notice some changes in the flow of your urine and how often you need to urinate.

Some women may need to use a thin, flexible tube, called a catheter, to empty their bladders for a while.

If you need a catheter, your doctor will give you instructions on how to use it.

You may also have some vaginal bleeding.

This will get better over time but you can expect that you may have spotting for up to a month after surgery.

You can use pads, but don't use tampons.

For about 6 weeks after surgery, you don't want to put anything in your vagina— so avoid douching and sex too.

Your doctor will give you instructions about when you can shower after surgery.

Don't take baths or swim for the first 2 weeks, or until your doctor says it's okay.

After going home, be sure to follow any instructions about incision care, diet, and activity, and take medicines as prescribed.

Here are some key things to help you heal and avoid problems.

Get plenty of rest but also get some light activity, like short walks.

Each day, try to walk around a little more.

Moving is really important because it helps prevent blood clots, and it can help with constipation, which can be a problem after surgery.

While you're healing, avoid strenuous activity or lifting anything heavy.

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This includes things like a vacuum cleaner, a heavy bag of any kind, or a child.

Drinking enough fluids, taking a stool softener, and eating foods that are good sources of fiber can help you avoid constipation.

Try foods like fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains.

When your doctor says it's okay to shower, gently wash the skin near the incisions on your belly or upper thighs with warm, soapy water.

But don't scrub the incisions. Gently pat them dry with a clean towel.

If your clothes rub an incision or it oozes fluid, cover it with a gauze bandage.

Then change the bandage every day or more often if needed.

Call your doctor if you have any problems, such as new or worse pain or bleeding, or an incision that comes open.

Also call your doctor if you have signs of infection, such as increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness; red streaks leading from an incision; pus draining from an incision; or a fever.

And call your doctor if you have vaginal discharge that increases in amount or smells bad, or if you can't pass stools or gas, or if you are too sick to your stomach to drink fluids.

And be sure to call your doctor if you have signs of a blood clot in your leg.

These include pain in your calf, back of the knee, thigh, or groin, or redness and swelling in your leg or groin.

Be sure to call your doctor if you have any questions.

Taking care of yourself after surgery can help you avoid problems and help your body heal.