

Mid-Urethral Sling

This handout will tell you how to care for yourself at home after your surgery.

You have noticed that you leak urine when you cough, strain, or sneeze (stress incontinence). A common treatment for stress incontinence involves the use of a permanent sling that lies under the middle section of the urethra. The sling works by giving support to the urethra when you cough, sneeze, or exercise.

Through a vaginal incision, a piece of mesh is placed between the urethra and the vaginal wall.

What to Expect

- You will have two small incisions either in your lower abdomen or on each inner thigh. You will also have an incision in your vagina.
- The vaginal stitches will absorb in 3-6 weeks. The groin or lower abdomen incisions are closed with skin glue. They will heal in 1-2 weeks.
- If this is the only surgery you are having, you will go home the same day.
- It is normal to feel some pain in the groin and vagina for 1 to 3 weeks. Some people describe this as feeling like the soreness felt after riding a horse or bicycle or pelvic cramping. You will have pain medicine prescribed for you.
- You may have bruising around the vulva, near the inner thigh, or lower abdominal incisions. The bruising will go away with time.
- You will have a catheter when you wake up. It will be removed before you go home. If you cannot urinate after the catheter is removed, it will be replaced. You will go home with the catheter for 3-5 days.
- If you go home without a catheter, empty your bladder every 2-3 hours during the day. Be sure to relax and give your bladder plenty of time to empty.
- You can expect some vaginal drainage or spotting. This may last 3-4 days. It might increase slightly as you increase your activity.

Activity Guidelines

- Do **not** lift more than 10 pounds (1 gallon of milk) for 6 weeks.
- Do **not** drive while you take prescription pain medicine or have a catheter in place.
- Put nothing in the vagina for 6 weeks (e.g. tampons, douches, vaginal suppositories). Sexual intercourse can often be resumed after 6 weeks.
- You may shower after 2 days.
- To prevent constipation, you can use the prescribed Colace® stool softeners (2-4 tabs/day). During the first 7-10 days, you should use milk of magnesia or 2 tablets of Sennekot®. Use at bedtime to start a bowel movement any day your bowels do not move.
- **Avoid** straining during the first few weeks. Constipation can affect your bladder working as usual.
- When you can return to work depends on how fast you recover and your job. This is often about 2-3 weeks. Talk with your doctor about when you can return to work and daily activities.

Follow-Up Care

You will have a follow-up visit in the Urology Clinic in 1-2 weeks.

When to Call

Call your doctor if you have any questions or concerns or notice any of these symptoms.

- Incision becomes red, tender, or swollen.
- Pus-like drainage occurs from any of the incisions.
- Temperature is above 100°F (by mouth) taken two times 4 hours apart.
- Problem urinating or the need to urinate very often.
- Blood in your urine.
- Constipation does not respond to the plan above.

Who to Call

University Hospital Urology
(608) 263-4757

Eastpark Medical Center Urology
(608) 914-0200

1 South Park Medical Center Urology
(608) 287-2900

After Hours, Nights, Weekends, and Holidays, the clinic number is answered by the paging operator. Ask for the Urology Doctor on call. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

Toll Free: 1-844-607-4800

Your medical record number

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 4/2025. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7222

