



Gynecologic Oncology Program

Total Abdominal Hysterectomy Care Package

Information about your pre surgery, surgery and post-surgical care

(705) 728-9090 Ext 43175



Welcome to Women's Gynecologic Health at the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre

Your doctor has recommended gynecologic surgery to help the problems you are having with your reproductive system. This book will help you to learn about gynecologic surgery, your stay in the hospital, your recovery as well as follow up appointments.

We encourage you to learn as much as you can. Knowing what to expect can help you feel less anxious and better prepared. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor or nurse. We welcome your questions at any time.

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Questions and Notes

Informed Consent

As part of informed consent, your doctor will talk to you about:

- What will be done during the surgery
- Why surgery is recommended
- Risks of surgery
- What would happen without surgery
- What other choices you may have

You may also be asked to consent to blood transfusion and/ or blood products, consent for tissue samples for research purposes, and/or consent for photography.

It is recommended for your benefit that you are aware of the above information. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your health care team.

*If you do not wish to have a blood transfusion there is a refusal of blood products form you will be asked to sign.



Learning about your Body

To understand your surgery, you need to know about these parts of your body.

Vagina: muscular tube that goes from the cervix to the outside of the body.

Cervix: The narrow lower part of the uterus, or womb. It is the passageway that connects the uterus to the vagina.

Uterus: The hollow, muscular, pear-shaped organ where a fetus develops and grows during pregnancy. The lining of the uterus is called the endometrium. It is made up of tissues and glands.

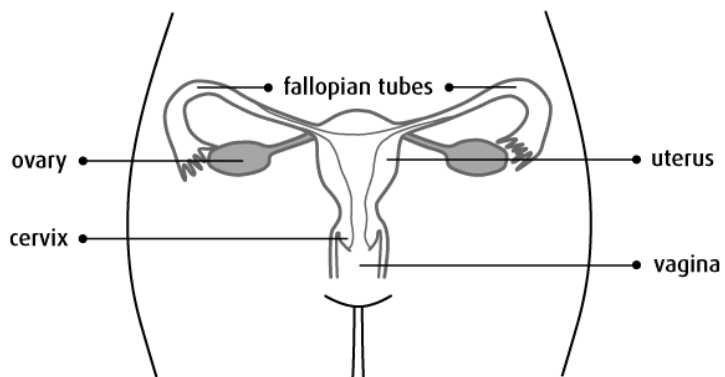
Fallopian tubes: 1 fallopian tube is on either side of the uterus. During the menstrual cycle, an ovary releases an egg. The egg travels through the fallopian tube from the ovary to the uterus

Ovaries: 2 small, oval-shaped organs. They are on either side of the uterus or womb, close to the end of the fallopian tubes. The ovaries make and release the eggs. They also make the female hormones estrogen and progesterone.

www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/

<http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/uterine/uterine-cancer/?region=on>

Female Reproductive System



Questions and Notes



What warning signs should I be concerned about and report?

- Persistent fever (greater than 38 degrees Celsius or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills or sweating
- Increasing redness and/or tenderness or foul-smelling fluid (pus) around or from the incision site
- Increased abdominal pain, tightness and feeling of fullness
- You have trouble passing gas or having a bowel movement
- Vomiting and inability to drink fluid for greater than four hours
- Increased vaginal bleeding (soaking sanitary napkin every hour), foul-smelling discharge and large blood clots
- You have the urge to pass urine all the time
- You have trouble passing urine
- You have pain, burning or bleeding when you pass urine
- **Shortness of breath or chest pain → Emergency Department**
- **Swelling and redness of the lower legs or calves → Emergency Department**
- **You have fainting or dizziness for more than a few seconds → Emergency Department**

If you have concerns about your gynecology surgery, do not wait for your follow-up appointment. Call the Nurse Navigator, 705-728-9090 ext. 43175

If you are unable to reach the doctor, go to an urgent care centre or the nearest emergency department.

What is an Abdominal Hysterectomy?

An **abdominal hysterectomy** is the removal of the uterus through an incision in the abdomen. Hysterectomies are performed for a variety of reasons, such as fibroids, pelvic pain, and suspicion of cancer or confirmed cancer. Following the procedure, you will no longer be able to become pregnant, and you will no longer get your period.

When the cervix is also removed, this is called a **total abdominal hysterectomy**. If the cervix is left behind, the surgery is called a **subtotal abdominal hysterectomy**.

When the ovaries and fallopian tubes are removed, this part of the surgery is called a **salpingo-oophorectomy**. If your ovaries are removed and you have not entered menopause naturally you are now considered post-menopausal. You will begin to experience menopausal symptoms a few days after your surgery such as hot flashes, mood swings and night sweats. If you only have your tubes removed but your ovaries are left behind then there is no change in your menopausal status and you will enter menopause naturally when your body intends for it to do so.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

For women that are put into surgical menopause by having their ovaries removed, some may be able to have hormone replacement therapy until around the time women are expected to naturally enter menopause. However your doctor will not know this information until your follow up appointment with the pathology results.

<http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/uterine/treatment/?region=on>



RVH Surgery Preparation Instructions

You will receive a call/ letter from the Pre-Admission Clinic to complete a preliminary health history.

A few days before surgery, or on the day of your consultation, you will need to visit the Pre-op Clinic.

Depending on the type of surgery you are having, your visit may include:

- A medical history
- Blood tests
- An electrocardiogram (ECG) to check your heart
- A visit with the Anesthesiologist
- A visit with a medical specialist



Smoking

It is advised that you quit smoking at least 4-8 weeks before your surgery. This will reduce your risks of complications from surgery such as infection and wound healing; as well as reduce your anesthetic risks related to your heart and lung function. Talk to your family doctor or nurse practitioner about the resources available to facilitate you achieving this goal.



The Day before Your Surgery

You will receive a call between 12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. providing you with **arrival time** and instructions for your surgery. This call will be made to the number provided by your surgeon's office. Please ensure there is someone to receive this call or that your voicemail clearly states your name to enable us to leave a detailed message. If your procedure is booked on a Monday, the call will come on the Friday prior.

In order to ensure that we have adequate time to prepare you for your surgery, it is necessary **that you report to the hospital 2 hours prior to your booked surgical time.**

Smoke Free Property

RVH is committed to promoting a healthy community and safe working environment for all individuals. RVH's entire property and affiliated buildings are completely smoke-free. No tobacco product use is permitted while on any RVH property, within buildings or in parking lots.



Please wash your hands

Handwashing is the best way to stop the spread of germs that could cause illness or infections



Everyone must wash their hands:

- When entering and leaving each unit or ward
- When entering and leaving a patient's room

You can wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer). The Ontario Hospital Association provides instructions on cards and posters in most areas of the hospital.

We are a fragrance restricted hospital

Many of our staff and patients have asthma and other allergies. Please do not wear or bring perfume, cologne, aftershave, scented hairspray or other scented products.



Visiting on Surgical Unit

Family and visitors are an important part of patient care. However, we need to limit the number of visitors to help prevent the spread of infection, ensure patient safety and help patients rest and recover. We ask that your visitors be in good health. If your visitors are not feeling well, please ask them not to visit. This includes symptoms such as cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea or vomiting.

Visiting Hours are 24 hours a day. However if visiting between the hours of 9pm and 5:30am please enter and exit through the Atrium Entrance on Level 2



Visits from family and friends are welcome. You can have 2 healthy adult visitors at a time. This includes your partner or support person. Choose the family members and friends who are most important to you to visit at the hospital. If other people wish to visit, please ask them to visit you at home. Children may visit provided your partner or another responsible adult stays with them at all times.

During your hospital stay you will be learning about your care. You may need time to rest. You may find it helpful to ask your visitors to stay for only a short time. To promote mutual respect, we ask all patients, visitors and staff to be respectful of others. If you have a roommate, please consider her needs for rest, care and privacy. There are times when it is better to be with your visitors in the Quiet Room.



Flowers and Balloons

Flowers delivered to RVH will be brought to patients' rooms where allowed, but loved ones should confirm with nursing staff prior to sending/bringing flowers to a patient. Flowers may also be purchased at Victoria's Gift Shop (level 2, near the Atrium entrance). Note: Latex balloons are not permitted at RVH due to allergies



The night before surgery have a carbohydrate rich meal for dinner (such as potatoes, bread, pasta, bananas, berries, or oatmeal).

The Day of Your Surgery

Please report to the Central/Surgical Registration area (located on Level 2) at your assigned time. For patients with **scheduled surgeries** and who have been given their **booked arrival time** please follow the instructions below.



Surgery will be delayed or cancelled if you do not follow these pre-procedure instructions:

- Do **not** eat anything after midnight. You may drink **clear fluids** (water, clear tea or coffee with sugar, apple juice, cranberry juice, sports drinks, kool-aid) up until **3 hours before your arrival time at the hospital.** Do not drink milk or orange juice. Exception: Take all your usual morning oral medication with a sip of water at 6:00 a.m. the day of your surgery unless instructed otherwise.

Surgery - General Instructions



- Bring your Ontario Health Card to the hospital with you.
- Bring any other health insurance cards that give evidence of additional coverage (i.e. Blue Cross).
- Please have a bath or shower at home prior to surgery.
- Please arrive with all make-up removed. Do not wear perfume or aftershave.
- Remove all body jewellery and leave all valuables at home (money, jewellery, credit cards). Any items that you may require should be brought in **after** surgery.
- Please bring your reading glasses and glass case (if needed) as well as a book or magazine to help pass the time. Do not wear contact lenses.



- Should you require items for an overnight stay please pack them in a small bag and leave them with family/friends until you are settled into your hospital room. Family may bring these items up to you after your surgery.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages (including wine and beer) for at least 24 hours before you are admitted for day surgery.
- Do not use any recreational drugs (marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, etc.) for at least 48 hours before your surgery.
- If you have walking aids (crutches, walker) at home that you may require after the surgery, please arrange to have them brought to your inpatient room after your surgery.

What to bring to the hospital:

- Your Health Card
- Pajamas or nightgown and a housecoat
- Well-fitting, non-slip footwear
- Unscented soap, shampoo, deodorant, lip balm
- Tissues, toothpaste, toothbrush and hairbrush
- A denture cup, if needed
- All medications that you take regularly, in labeled pharmacy containers
- Several pairs of loose, comfortable cotton underwear
- Loose, comfortable clothes to wear home
- Your own pillow, if you wish
- Your CPAP machine for sleeping
- Walking aids
- Your glasses
- 2 packs of chewing gum

Please do not bring in jewelry or valuables. The hospital is not responsible for lost or stolen articles.

Day of Surgery

Before your surgery, the nurse will put an intravenous (IV) tube into a vein in your arm, to give you fluids and medication. A nurse will take your vital signs and weight.



Rotary House

Guests Are Eligible to Stay At Rotary House If You:

- Obtain approval and the completed referral form from your nurse
- Are a registered patient of the SMRCP receiving medical testing, planning and/or treatment
- Travel more than 40km for treatment
- Are fully able to care for yourself and take your medications
- Can attend medical appointments on your own
- Can manage two flights of stairs on your own



If you are unable to meet accommodation requirements by yourself, you can stay at Rotary House with the help of an Essential Companion to assist you in all activities of daily living.

A nominal fee of \$15 a day will be charged to patients of the SMRCP to cover the cost of maintenance and upkeep of the lodge. **The lodge is only open Monday to Friday only, and check out is by noon on Friday.**

Essential companions will be accommodated at no additional charge.

When there is available space, escorts of guests (spouses or friends that would like to stay) will be required to pay a fee of \$45 per day.

Costs per day
Patient - \$15/day
Essential Companion - Free
Spouses, family members or friends - \$45/day



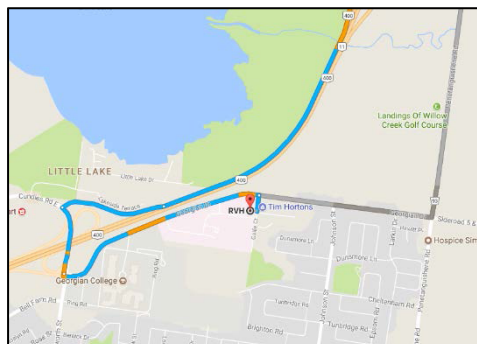
Getting to RVH

Arriving By Car

From HWY 400

Northbound: Exit at Duckworth St. and continue straight through the lights onto Georgian Drive.

Southbound: Exit at Duckworth St, turn left onto Duckworth St. and left again at the next set of lights to turn onto Georgian Drive.



From Penetanguishene Rd (Hwy 93)

Exit South and turn right onto Georgian Drive.

Parking- Daily, weekly and monthly parking passes are available. Rates and instructions are listed on all parking machines and brochures are available at the volunteer's desks or at the parking office (main visitor parking lot). For assistance, please contact (705) 728-9090 ext. 44114 or email parking@rvh.on.ca

Parking Rates	Passes can be purchased at Pay Stations
15 minutes- \$2	24 hours- \$19 (unlimited in and out privileges)
30 minutes- \$3	Weekly passes- \$35
60 minutes- \$6	Monthly passes- \$90
90 minutes- \$9	
120 minutes- \$12	
Daily Maximum- \$15 (24hr no in and out privileges)	

When you are ready, someone will walk with you to the operating room (OR) receiving area. If you prefer to use a wheelchair, please tell the nurse.

If you have glasses, dentures, or hearing aids you may wear them.

A nurse and doctor from the OR will review your surgery and answer your questions.

Once in the OR you will take part in a safety checklist that reviews all information related to your surgery. You will be asked to breathe oxygen from a mask over your nose and mouth.

The Anesthesiologist will give you medications through your IV to make you sleep and feel no pain during surgery. When you are asleep, a thin tube called a catheter may be put into your bladder to drain urine and keep it empty.

How you may feel after surgery

You will have an incision on your abdomen. You will also have an IV (intravenous) in your hand to give you fluids. You may also have a catheter (tube) in your bladder to help you urinate.

■ Pain

You may have some pain around your incision. You may have an Epidural (a small tube into your back to give you pain medication), IV pain medication or tablets to take by mouth. Please communicate with your nurse about your pain levels. You will have access to both opioid and non- opioid pain medication.



- Other comfort measures to help control your pain are warm blankets, ice packs, and distraction methods such as music or reading.

- These medications can make you constipated, you may need a stool softener to keep your bowels moving while taking pain medication.



- The pain medication you are taking in the hospital will be the same prescription that you will be taking when you get home, if needed.

▪ Activity

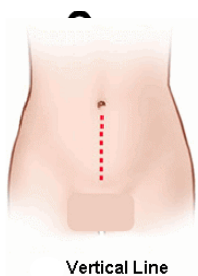
The nurse will help you get up and out of bed later that day of surgery or the next morning. Walking helps to reduce your risk of complications therefore it is encouraged that you to mobilize after your surgery.

▪ Eating and Drinking



You can drink soon after your surgery. When you are drinking well your IV can be stopped. If you are having nausea or an upset stomach after surgery you will get clear fluids to try. Some people feel like this when they have anesthetic and that is normal. Your diet is increased when your nausea is under control, you will have medications available to help achieve this.

▪ Your Incision



1. You will have an incision that goes up and down or side to side (bikini style) depending on the reason for surgery and your body type. This decision is sometimes not made until you are examined in the operating room.
2. Your incision will be covered with a bandage when you wake up. The bandage is usually changed the day after surgery.

3. It is important to keep this area dry while it is healing. It is normal to experience a small amount of clear, yellow-pink drainage. If you are experiencing this, the nurse will put some gauze over the incision. If there is no drainage, the incision will be left uncovered.

have a limited understanding of English, it is helpful to bring another adult who understands English to help with interpretation.

Services at RVH

The **Information desk** and **bank machines** are located on the 2nd floor at the main entrance



Gift Shop

RVH Victoria's Gift Shop is located on the 2nd floor across from the surgery registration. Open Monday- Friday 8:30am-8pm and Saturday and Sunday 12:30- 4:30pm. Call extension 42430/31

The gift shop has many items, such as:

- Clothing • Small gifts • some toiletries



Pharmacy

PureHealth Pharmacy is located on the 2nd floor, next to the emergency department. If you have a prescription, you may want to get it filled here before you leave the hospital.

Hours: Monday- Friday 8am-8pm. Saturday-Sunday & Holidays 10am-5pm Extension: 44445

The pharmacy also supplies medical equipment, toiletries and a wide variety of over the counter medications

Food and Snacks

Food on the ward is provided for patients. Visitors can buy food and snacks in these places:



- The **Café Royale** is located on the 2nd floor at the main entrance and is open 6:30am- 6:30pm Monday- Friday. You can buy drinks and food, such as muffins, soup, sandwiches and bagels. Call ext. 42433

Food Court: Our cafeteria, is located on the 1st floor. It is open 7 days a week with varying hours depending on vendors

Vending machines are located throughout the hospital.



are local to Barrie, this will be an in-person visit. If you are from outside Barrie, this appointment may be made over the Telemedicine Network closest to your home town.



Hospital care

A Team Approach

*A team of people provide your care.
We work together to meet your needs.*

The members of your health care team include:

- You, your support persons and family
- Health care providers such as your Gyne Oncologist, Nurse Practitioner, Nurses, Social Worker, Pharmacist, or Physiotherapist/Occupational Therapist
- support staff such as the business clerk and environmental aide
- supervised students and health care professionals in training

Be involved in your care

We encourage you to be an active member of your health care team.

You can be involved by:

- sharing information about your health
- telling us your wishes
- learning about your health and taking care of yourself
- letting us know what information or help you need

Always feel free to ask members of your team including your doctors if they have washed their hands.

Communication

For us to work as a team, communication is very important. We welcome your comments and questions at any time. Always ask for any information you need from your health care providers during your hospital stay. We will protect the privacy of your personal health information. The members of the health care team only share information as needed, to provide the best care for you. If you



Exercises to help you recover

During the first few days, do these exercises every hour that you are awake. You can do these exercises lying down or sitting up.

Deep breathing and coughing exercises

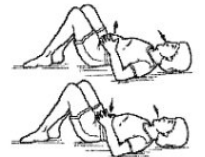
Deep breathing and coughing help to:

- keep your lungs expanding fully
- clear mucous from your lungs and throat
- reduce the chance of getting a chest infection



How to do deep breathing and coughing

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent or if you can, sit up in a chair.
2. Put your hands high up on your stomach as shown in the pictures. If you have an abdominal incision, hold onto your incision with your hands or hold a pillow over your incision.
3. Breathe in as deeply as you can. Feel your stomach push out against your hands.
4. Breathe out slowly through pursed lips, like blowing out a candle.
5. Repeat 5 times.
6. Then take a deep breath and make a strong, deep cough.



Just clearing your throat is not enough.

Leg Exercises

Leg exercises help keep blood flowing in your legs. It will also help if you do not cross your legs when you are lying or sitting.

Exercise 1: Slide your heel

1. Sit up in bed with both legs straight.
2. Bend one knee, sliding your foot up the bed.
3. Gently slide this foot down the bed until the leg is straight.
4. Repeat 10 times with this leg.
5. Repeat the exercise with the other leg.



Exercise 2: Point and flex your foot

1. Point and flex one foot 10 times. Relax.
2. Repeat with the other leg.

Exercise 3: Circle your foot

1. Straighten one leg and circle the foot to the right 10 times.

Then circle this foot to the left 10 times. Relax.

2. Repeat with the other foot.



At Home Care

▪ **Can I expect any vaginal discharge or bleeding?**

Yes, you will need to wear a pad. You may experience bleeding or discharge for up to a few weeks. This is normal, but the bleeding should never be more than what you would have with a normal period. If it is more, you should call your doctor immediately.

▪ **What activities can I do?**

At first, you may find your usual activities too hard for you. If an activity is uncomfortable, stop that activity and try it again in a day or two.

Listen to your body. If you find that an activity gives you pain, stop and rest. Wait a few days before trying that activity again.

Do not do activities that could pull or strain your abdomen, such as:

- walking your dog
- strenuous cleaning such as vacuuming
- lifting anything over 4 kg or 10 pounds (the weight of a bag of groceries or a small baby)

Over the next 6 weeks as your body heals, gradually increase your activities. Exercise such as walking can help you recover. Talk with your doctor about when you can resume other forms of exercise, such as aerobics or swimming.

When you feel tired, stop and rest. Sitting or standing for a long time, or driving, may be uncomfortable because there may be swelling inside your abdomen.

You will probably need to arrange for some help when you come home from the hospital. You may need:

- Help with meals, housework and child care.
- Someone to drive you for a couple of weeks, if you have had an abdominal surgery.

Driving could strain your abdomen.

- Time off work. The length of time off work depends on the type of surgery you have, how well you are recovering and the type of work you do. Talk with your doctor about when you could return to work.

▪ Sexual Intercourse

Do not have sexual intercourse or insert anything into the vagina for six weeks or as instructed by your surgeon. This includes tampons and douches. For vaginal discharge, use pads and remember to change them at least once every four hours. Once resuming sexual intercourse using a water-soluble lubricant (such as Astroglide) may be helpful to relieve vaginal dryness. Your interest in sex may be low, as it may be after any surgery. When you have intercourse, you and your partner should not notice anything different. If you notice changes, discuss them with your partner and your doctor.

Our Sexual Health Intimacy and Cancer (SHIC) Clinic can help you and your partner with any of your sexual health concerns in a professional and private meeting. You may self-refer to this service or ask your Nurse Navigator about this service.

Call 705-728-9090 Ext 43520

Each woman reacts differently to this surgery. You may feel worried about its effects on you and your partner. This is normal. Give yourself time to adjust physically and emotionally. Most women feel confident and comfortable in getting back to their normal routines and activities within a few months after surgery.

▪ Follow Up

You will have a post-op appointment with your surgeon a couple of weeks after surgery to review your pathology report and monitor your progress. Their office calls you with this appointment after your surgery. If you

