

## **ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING INCONTINENCE, PROLAPSE and MAJOR PELVIC SURGERY**

You will either be preparing for or have just gone through incontinence and/or prolapse surgery. The following give you a general overview of what to expect:

**Immediately after surgery** you are likely to have a catheter in the bladder. This prevents the bladder from overfilling and allows you some rest time. The catheter will either come out on day one or day two post surgery. In some situations the catheter will need to stay in longer. You may well have a vaginal pack which acts as a compress to the walls of the vagina which have been repaired. This usually comes out on day one (ie the morning or afternoon after surgery). You will have available to you a number of different pain killers and treatments to reduce any nausea.

Nursing staff will keep a careful eye on your progress and in most situations I am likely to see you each day until your discharge home. Depending on what surgery you have had you will be able to go home any time between day one and day five. The more major the surgery the more likelihood that you will stay in up to five days.

**Once you go home** At the time of your discharge you will have some painkillers to go home with. You should use these to remain comfortable and not wait until your pain, if any, rises. Protection of your pelvic floor is essential. It will have been damage to the pelvic floor that caused the symptoms which resulted in you having surgery so it is in your interests to do all that you can to allow this to heal in the short term and also protect it for your future.

**Protecting your pelvic floor:** Common sense should prevail! If it feels as if you should not be doing it, then you probably shouldn't! In the first two weeks rest as much as possible, avoid lifting heavy weights {nothing heavier than a Yellow Pages phonebook}, standing for prolonged periods, exercise such as going to the gym or any action that might put strain on either the pelvic floor or your abdomen. After the first two weeks you can then gradually introduce exercise but I believe it is important to avoid lifting any weights that aren't necessary. If you have had a TVT procedure you will be able to drive after two weeks, if you have had pelvic reconstructive surgery either alone or in combination with a TVT procedure then you should avoid driving for four weeks (6 weeks if you have had open abdominal surgery). When you first begin to drive it may be sensible to take a short trip with a friend or relative in the car with you.

Anticipate a return to work in a minimum of two weeks if you have only had a TVT procedure and four weeks if you have had prolapse surgery. Obviously in either situation if you can take six weeks off work it is an ideal time during which your body can recover. Intercourse should be avoided until your six week postoperative check. Should you have any worries or concerns following your discharge home do not hesitate to contact Dr Onuma either at his rooms or using his after hours' number.