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CERVICAL SUTURE : POST – OPERATIVE CARE

General instructions

For the first 24 hours after your procedure you should not work, drive, drink alcohol or operate any heavy machinery. A responsible adult should remain with you overnight.

Eating and drinking

You can suck a small amount of ice for the first four hours after your cervical suture. You are then free to eat and drink.

Pain relief

If you have had a spinal anaesthetic this will take several hours to wear off. When this wears off, or when you wake up from a general anaesthetic you will need ongoing pain relief. Initial pain relief will have been given in theatre which may include a combination of Paracetamol and an anti-inflammatory suppository. In the ward you may require Paracetamol, Panadeine or Panadeine Forte, Pethidine or Tramadol to ease your discomfort. It is very common to have cramping pain after a cervical suture is inserted and this will continue for several days. It is not a sign of labour.

Antibiotics

You will have been administered antibiotics during the course of the procedure. Unless I specifically indicate to you, it is not necessary to continue taking antibiotics following surgery.

Prevention of deep venous thrombosis (DVT)

Depending on your risk of developing a deep venous thrombosis you may have been given a prophylactic injection at the time of surgery. Under certain circumstances this may need to continue for several days or even longer after the procedure. I will inform you if this is the case.

Blood loss

Bleeding is always present following a cervical suture insertion. This will initially be quite heavy, bright red bleeding and will settle over two to four days. It is not normal to have bleeding that is any heavier than a period occurring more than 48 hours after a cervical suture is inserted.

Suture material

The suture material I use is the consistency of a thick black shoe lace (it will not fall out). The vaginal incisions are closed with a very fine suture with the consistency of fishing line. There are several of these sutures and they are dissolving (they will fall out). When they fall out it may be onto your underwear or into the toilet bowl but it is quite normal for this to happen and you do not need to be alarmed.

Fever

It is not unusual to have a low grade fever (below 38 degrees) in the first 48 hours after a cervical suture is inserted. Temperatures above 38 degrees are not normal following this and will require investigation. If this occurs you must telephone me.

Lifting

You should avoid any lifting following the insertion of a cervical suture. If you have a young child you should make every effort to avoid lifting unless this is absolutely necessary. This may require some modification to how your household is run but it is essential to keep the strain off the suture.

Driving

You will be generally physically ready to drive four to five days after you leave hospital. When you are driving you should ensure that you are not lifting any heavy objects into or out of the car including your children unless this is absolutely necessary.

Exercise

I prefer that you avoid all forms of exercise after a cervical suture is inserted. Although this may be difficult for you if you are used to exercising or are concerned about weight gain during pregnancy, cervical sutures are only inserted for pregnancies that are at high risk of premature delivery and stopping exercise is one way to ensure your pregnancy continues to term.

Sexual relations

I prefer that you do not have sexual relations while a cervical suture is in place. This includes all forms of sexual relations and orgasm.

Bowels

Constipation is very common during pregnancy. With a cervical suture in place it is essential to avoid constipation whenever possible. The best way to do this is to ensure an adequate fluid and fibre intake. Two glasses of pear juice daily is another very effective way to prevent constipation. Alternatively kiwi fruit (sliced paper thin with the skin still on) is also very effective. If this is inadequate in preventing constipation you will need to discuss this with me rather than choosing any over the counter alternatives without my advice.

Removal of suture

If you are having a caesarean section I will remove your cervical suture at the time of the caesarean section. If not, I will book you into hospital at 37 weeks to have the cervical suture removed under spinal anaesthetic. This will involve a half day stay in hospital. Occasionally, removing the cervical suture can precipitate labour so I will advise you to bring your bags with you just in case this occurs. Generally, labour will not follow removal of a cervical suture and you will be discharged home to await the onset of labour.

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